



*midnight*

ISSUE NUMBER 35

*man*

FALL 1986 \$3.50





# midnight marquee

- Page 4 **DECADES OF THE DEAD: DISSECTING GEORGE ROMERO'S ZOMBIE TRILOGY** by Gary J. Svehla. A close look at NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, DAWN OF THE DEAD, and DAY OF THE DEAD reveals an intellectual vision.
- Page 11 **UNIVERSAL'S "GOLDEN AGE": SOME FACTS AND FIGURES** by Greg Mank. Recently studio archived records have surfaced revealing before now unknown "facts and figures" concerning horror film classics.
- Page 15 **UNIVERSAL'S POVERTY ROW: THE SAGA OF PAULA THE APE WOMAN** by Arthur Joseph Lundquist. Universal's "Jungle Women" 1940's "B" series trilogy is given, at last, an in-depth critical analysis.
- Page 21 **REMEMBERING THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE - THAT FORGOTTEN SECOND FEATURE!** by Paul Anthony Parla. The state of confusion of Universal's late-fifties' "B" science fiction product is here explored.
- Page 26 **WHAT SPANNED ALIEN?** by John R. Duvoli. In the wake of the recently successful ALIEN and ALIENS, John R. Duvoli fondly remembers those half-forgotten s.f. schlock films that inspired these mega-hits.
- Page 32 **FORGOTTEN FACES OF FANTASTIC FILMS: E.E. CLIVE AND ARTHUR EDMUND CAREWE** by Jim Coughlin.
- Page 36 **BORGO PASS MEETS THE HOLLYWOOD FREEWAY: THE SHOCK SCHLOCK OF AL ADAMSON** By Dean Chambers. The schlock director who brought the world DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN, BRAIN OF BLOOD, etc. is here probed.
- Page 42 **MIDNIGHT MARQUEE MOVIE REVIEWS** by Gary J. Svehla. Discover what fantasy films have taken top honor.
- Page 45 **MIDNIGHT MARQUEE BOOK REVIEWS** by Gary J. Svehla. Find out what important titles have recently arrived upon the scene.
- Page 46 **MIDNIGHT MARQUEE GRAVE DIGGINGS [LETTERS]**. Our readers speak their minds both pro and con!

**EDITORIAL STAFF:** EDITOR, PUBLISHER, WRITER, TYPIST, LAYOUT: GARY J. SVEHLA; MANAGING EDITOR: RICHARD J. SVEHLA; CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: DEAN CHAMBERS, JIM COUGHLIN, JOHN R. DUVOLI, ARTHUR JOSEPH LUNDQUIST, GREG MANK, and PAUL ANTHONY PARLA. **ART STAFF:** DAVID DANIELS [page 43,44], ROBERT H. KNOX, ALLEN J. KOSZOWSKI [page 4, 15, 21, 36], and DAVID ROBINSON [page 11, 26, and logos page 32, 42, 45, 46].

**SPECIAL CREDIT AND THANKS:** Richard J. Svehla, my father, for overall assistance; Allen Koszowski for accepting the challenge of filling Bill Nelson's shoes (and doing a terrific job to boot!); Greg Mank, Arthur Lundquist, Paul Parla, Dean Chambers, John Duvoli, Jim Coughlin, and Bill George for Special Materials; Judy Clarke Keane and Scott Levine of Twentieth Century Fox; Columbia Studios; Mr. Alex Gordon for special assistance; Wolff, Freed, and Greenberg, Inc.; Thompson, Perl, and Associates, Inc.; Jerry Ohlinger's Movie Material Store, Inc. (and Mike Woodin!); Mrs. Joan Jewell and Kara Svehla for clerical assistance; and Sue, my wife, for her patience (in living with "the bear") and encouragement - love and kisses!

MIDNIGHT MARQUEE #35, Fall 1986, is published every October by Gary J. Svehla at \$3.50 per copy (via third class mail). Editorial Offices: Gary Svehla, 504 Elmwood Road, Baltimore, MD 21206. Subscription/Back Issue Offices: Richard Svehla, 4000 Glenarm Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21206. Art and written contributions are encouraged, but writers/artists are asked to discuss ideas with the editor in advance. MidMar is available free in trade with any and all fanzines, for contributions, and for published letters of comment. The entire contents Copyright 1986 by Gary J. Svehla. Printed in the U.S.A. Nothing may be reprinted without the publisher's written permission. Individual writers and artists assume responsibility for the originality of their work and for any opinions expressed.

**AD RATES:** \$50.00 per quarter page. Classified Ads: 5 column lines or less - \$10.00. We will insert your pre-printed advertising sheets in subscription orders for \$40.00.

PRINTED BY THE ARCADE PRESS, BALTIMORE, MD (phone: 301-426-1150). Special thanks to Bob Gehrig, Jeff, and the crew!

**FRONT COVER:** Two rival scientists - one living, one dead - confront each other in Allen Koszowski's blood-red cover from RE-ANIMATOR; **INSIDE FRONT:** Richard Moll terrorizes members who occupy the HOUSE, designed by Allen Koszowski; **INSIDE BACK:** Robert H. Knox creates a montage of those s.f. movie monsters that spawned ALIEN/ALIENS; **BACK COVER:** David Robinson contrasts the innocence of the unicorns to the evil of Darkness (Tim Curry) from Ridley Scott's LEGEND.

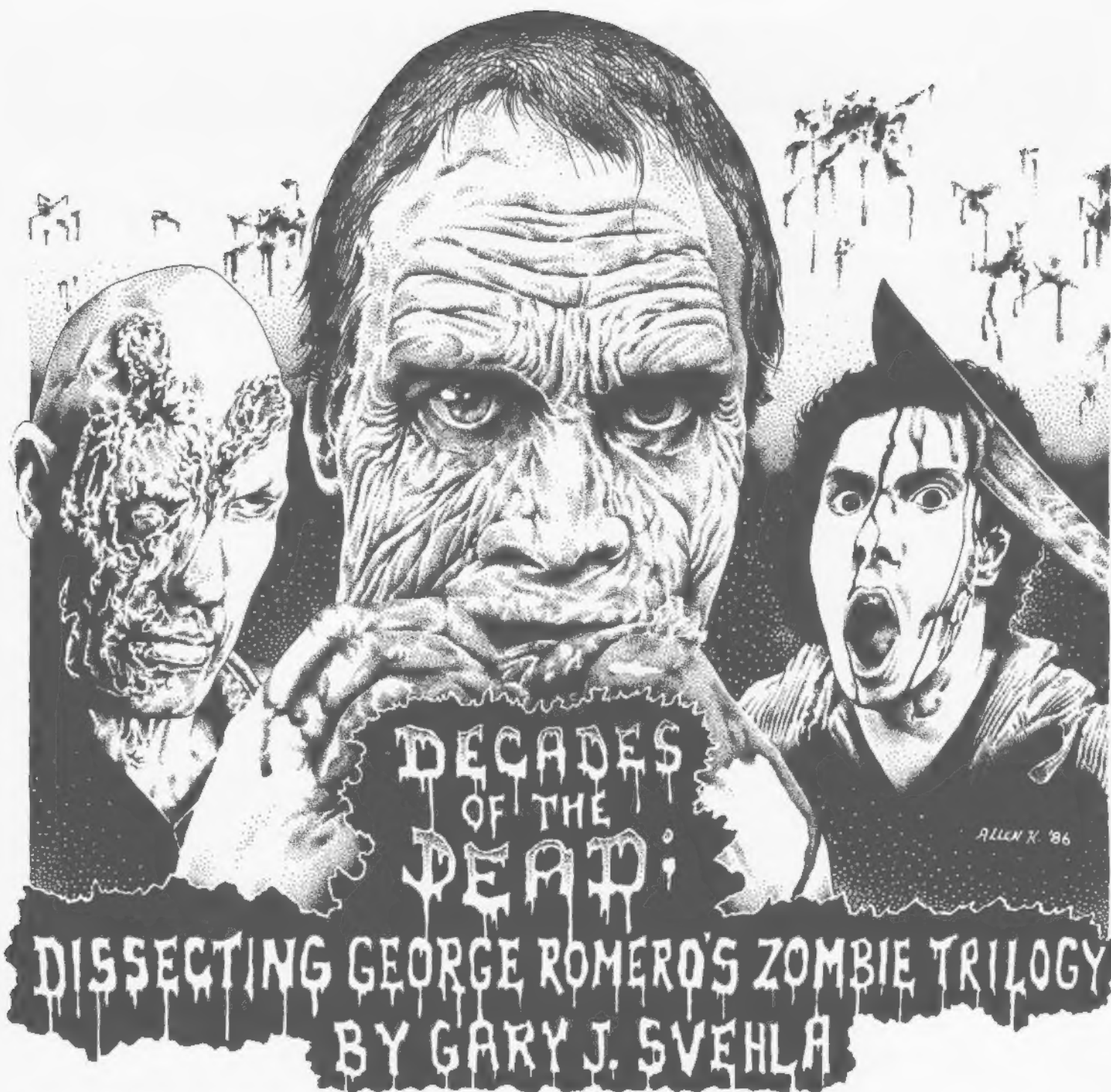
**DEDICATION:** To Ann Y. Svehla [November 1922 - March 1986] - an inspirational mother to me, and a loving wife to my father, Richard.

Welcome to issue #35 of Midnight Marquee, celebrating our 23rd year of publication. No one likes being caught in the middle, but sometimes, as legendary bluesman Robert Johnson once sang - "I'm standing at the crossroads, believe I'm sinking down" - I feel caught between a rock and a hard place.

A few months ago, after mailing out a flyer announcing the contents of this current issue, I received a curt letter from a faithful reader who politely declined to buy our current issue because of our coverage of ultra-gore cinema. Far be it presumptuous of me to mention that the bulk of our issues are devoted to horror/science fiction films produced prior to 1965, but because of one article devoted to splatter, "Decades of The Dead," this subscriber is chucking both the baby and the bath water. "Where else are you going to find a fantasy film magazine that covers these older films...anywhere?" my wife Sue chimed to my defense. True, we cannot always please everyone, but MidMar is devoted to the celebration of horror/s.f. cinema both past and present. Many of today's films are little more than garbage, but much of the modern fantasy film genre is engrossing, energetic, and inspired. Movies such as Romero's DAY OF THE DEAD, Cronenberg's THE FLY, Hooper's TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE PART 2, and Cameron's ALIENS excite me today in mid-life much in the same manner as HORROR OF DRACULA terrified me when I was eight years old.

Too many members of my generation now approach film as they approach music and popular culture in general. These "Yupified" colleagues are no fun anymore. They are too sophisticated to

[Continued on Page 25]



Horror films thrive from energy created via their stark imagery, those memorable elements and characters burnished into the consciousness of the movie-going public: razor-sharp vampire teeth ready to plunge into delicate soft flesh; an anguished man looking down at hairy palms as the luminescent full-moon beckons overhead; a raging thunder storm thrusting brightly lit spinning wheels into motion to bring life to the dead; and finally, the dazed expressions of herky-jerky, brain-dead zombies- their arms groping like the blind -instinctively searching out the flesh of the living. What vampires, werewolves, and Frankenstein's monster meant to the generations of movie-goers of the past, zombies today inspire the latest generation of horror movie connoisseurs. Even though the American zombie film can be traced back to such innocent times as the fifties' *TEENAGE ZOMBIES*, Val Lewton's *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*, and the Halperin Brothers' *WHITE ZOMBIE*, the breed of zombie film that impacts such an insidious hold on today's audiences primarily began with George A. Romero's *DEAD* trilogy: *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* (1968), *DAWN OF THE DEAD* (1978), and *DAY OF THE*

*DEAD* (1985). Unlike the scores of toxic waste celluloid which Romero's films quickly generated (they being almost always imitative and all so inferior), Romero definitely has an artistic method to his commercial madness. By delving into the "flesh" of these three movies, Romero's artistic vision begs for further analytical dissection. Not to imply that Romero is not first and foremost a commercially inspired filmmaker, but perhaps surprisingly to some, his films do communicate intellectual ideas within their gore-splattered veneer of disgust and outrage.

*NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, that initially forgotten drive-in programmer, when first released in 1968, caught critical attention simply on the virtue of its excessive obnoxiousness. Every element, upon initial viewing, appears to go over the top- with the exception of the budget. Some embarrassingly inadequate acting, working within a very limited on-locating setting, undermines the effectiveness of the film. *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* garnered media attention because it dared to shock audiences in a manner considered taboo by the motion picture community- by graphically depicting human



cannibalism. But Romero, true to the hippie-inspired "do-your-own-thing" sixties, was a lone wolf, a maverick who manifested an undisguised commercial motive in producing and distributing movies.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, more so than his later movies in the series, shows Romero's "roots," having formerly produced both industrial and documentary films. LIVING DEAD is basically two movies existing parallel to each other in time. The first movie is the newly emerging dramatic cinema-side of Romero, projecting a morbid tale of survival featuring a microcosm of American society forced to work together (even though they are at each other's throats) or die. The pressures created by a world of ever-increasing living dead who constantly attempt to "conquer" the household are actually secondary to the desensitizing human bond existing between the living occupants within the house. It is no coincidence that director Romero's name appears superimposed over the image of the American flag in the opening credits.

The second parallel movie is the more familiar (to Romero) one of cinema-verite, the documentary. As inhabitants of the household bicker and yell over where the best place to die would be, the radio (at first) and later the television create a show in itself. Via the media bulletins the audience learns of "...epidemic mass murders...mayhem...engulfing much of nature." News bulletins reveal that these "things" (the most oft-used term to describe the living dead) were created from radiation emitted from a NASA satellite destroyed by the government after it was returning to Earth after orbiting Venus. We learn from television that "people who recently died are coming back to life and seeking human victims." Citizens, at first warned to remain locked-up tight in their houses, are now advised to move to National Guard controlled rescue stations throughout the state (such real-life Pennsylvania cities as Latrobe are posted as rescue centers across the bottom of TV screens). Scientists interviewed on television encourage citizens to "forego the dubious comforts a funeral service might give...corpses must be burned." George Romero, in a small cameo as a newscaster interviewing NASA scientists on the street, symbolizes the process of what Romero the filmmaker has become—a documentary movie-maker caught within a world of dramatic exploitation.

Let's not be pretentious! NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD was probably envisioned by Romero as his "meal-ticket" to the smorgasbord of big-time, commercial success. However, LIVING DEAD becomes a riveting experience mainly because of the intricate relationships existing between the major characters and the human society at large. And these human relationships are framed within the larger context of man's trivial need to dominate his fellow men.

Three societal "worlds" exist in the movie: everywhere "outside" the secure home, the "upper" level consisting of the first and second floors of the home, and finally, the basement or the "subterranean" level. The "subterranean" level houses Harry and Helen Cooper, a middle-aged married couple who think only of their own family's survival. Also down there are Tom and Judy, the "cute" and generally good-hearted teenage couple.

The "upper" level is occupied by Ben, a determined and pragmatic young black, and Barbra, a young woman suffering emotionally from witnessing the death of her brother Johnny, her entire performance reflecting her trance-like state of shock and psychosis.

The "outside" is comprised of ghouls feeding upon the living and police-directed citizens' patrols who roam the countryside shooting the brains out of the living dead ("kill the brain- you kill the ghoul") and burning the bodies.

Via the manner in which Romero intersperses these three "levels" of society, illustrating pressures from within each stratum and from without, the substance (dare I say thematic definition) of LIVING DEAD becomes apparent.

As the viewer is first introduced to Ben's world of the "upper" level of the house, the barely cognizant Barbra merely sits and stares, once in a while screaming, "We got to help Johnny," as the quietly determined Ben rounds up food and supplies and barricades windows and doors with available lumber. Unknown to these two survivors, the Coopers and the young teenaged couple have been hiding in the cellar listening to and ignoring all activity above, thus avoiding a chance to help other human beings. The bald, titular leader Harry, finally appearing above, startles the already terrified Barbra and announces that the basement is the safest

place to be. "Why risk our lives because somebody might need help" best sums up Harry's "me-first" attitude.

Ben, leader of the "upper" level, thinks Harry is foolish to suggest that all survivors lock themselves down in the cellar where humans may find themselves with their backs against the wall without any exit. Harry believes that the flimsy boards offer little protection above. Helen is upset with Harry when she learns "there's a radio up there and you boarded us down here!" The taciturn yet diplomatic Tom offers, "We'd all be a lot better off working together." Ben finally sets the boundaries as Harry, retreating to his "subterranean" world (where his daughter Karen lies mortally wounded), tries to gather together people who support his ostrich ideas of survival- "We may not enjoy living together but dying together won't prove anything." Ben commands, "I'm boss up here. You can be boss down there. I'm fighting up here for the food and the radio!" Harry glumly responds telling everyone that when his cellar door is locked, it remains locked and will not be reopened. But in a matter of moments, these little minds playing "king of the hill" once again merge their respective "worlds" together again. Wherever survival is involved, Romero shows us the true nature of human beings: self-serving, greedy, jealous, and caring only for their own survival and petty power.

This insensitive vision of humanity is continued "outside" embodied by the police-directed citizens' rescue patrols. While being interviewed by a reporter (actually local Pennsylvania TV personality Bill Cardille), the local police chief responds enthusiastically, "Beat 'em or burn 'em- they go up pretty easy!" When asked if the ghouls are slow moving, the police chief answers matter-of-factly, "They're dead. They're all...messed up." The

Top: Three distinct personalities clash (l.-r.: disturbed Barbra, pragmatic Ben, and diplomatic Tom); Bottom: The dead don't stay dead for long in NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, Romero's first "classic"





After feeding on young Tom and Judy, the living dead use a ram-rod to over-power the human occupants of the house in *LIVING DEAD*

reporter finally implies that this police action can hopefully be wrapped up in 24 hours. Unemotionally committed, the police approach their duty as though they were picking off a horde of wild dogs instead of blowing away the remains of human beings, many of which were their neighbors and friends.

*NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* not only explores the lack of humanity existing among the living, but briefly investigates humanity's lack of respect for its dead. The movie's initial sequence—Johnny and Barbra putting a wreath on their father's grave—projects the commonly held cynical tone that many among the living harbor toward the dead. Johnny complains about driving six hours from Pittsburgh— their mother's special request —to spend five minutes once a year changing the wreath on the grave site (while elderly mother remains at home). He annoyingly mentions the fact that he is probably buying the same wreath year-after-year. As Barbra solemnly kneels to pray, Johnny disgustedly interjects, "Come on Barbra, church was this morning!" Even though the satellite radiation becomes the logical explanation of why "murder victims... partially devoured by murderers...are killing and eating their victims...eating the flesh of the people they kill," Romero's hell-on-Earth— human beings literally and symbolically eating each other —appears to be just as much the result of the living's insensitivity to each other and its disrespect toward the dead. Perhaps *REVENGE OF THE LIVING DEAD* might have proven to be a more fitting title in retrospect.

Ramming his point home, Romero, by the film's climax, juxtaposes the ultimate disintegration of human brotherhood with the final victory of the dead. After young Tom and Judy are consumed in the fiery explosion of a pick-up truck, their burnt flesh becoming a grisly, ghoulish feast, Ben fights his way back to the house only to face Harry's refusal to unlock the front door. After Ben practically breaks it down, Harry immediately comes to the black man's aid when it appears the ghouls will overrun the house. Viciously pummeling Harry, Ben swears, "I ought to feed you to these things!" After being motivated by their human nourishment, the living dead, using the human's heavy wooden torch as their ram-rod, attempt to break through the boarded barricades. Harry, seizing the opportunity, grabs Ben's fallen rifle (while Ben struggles to push the spastic hands and arms of the dead back outside) and orders everyone down into the basement— his terrain. Ben and Harry wrestle for control as Harry is critically wounded by a rifle blast, and Harry crawls into the cellar to die at the foot of his daughter's bed. Momentarily, the daughter (having died becoming "one of those things") begins to nibble upon Daddy, soon becoming suddenly interrupted by a dazed Mommy. Coldly reaching for a garden spade, the little girl savagely (yet unemotionally) stabs her mother to death. This stark image of young innocence creating this ultimate act of violence with parents as the victims remains eerily unnerving still when viewed today. Upstairs, as the ghouls overrun the house, Barbra is confronted by Johnny, her brother, who has joined the ever-increasing league of the

living dead. By morning only Ben survives, and he is just as coolly and calculatedly shot through the forehead by the citizens' rescue team who assume he is a ghoul— "Aim right between the eyes... good shot, he's dead. There's another one for the fire."

As human insensitivity increases, as humanity is consumed by its own vices and frailties, the armies of the living dead increase in both strength and numbers. Our three societal "worlds"— the "outside," the "upper" level, and the "subterranean"—all will perish, all being over-run by scores of the living dead taking their revenge.

To further grind out the point, Romero places his end credits superimposed upon realistic, grainy freeze-frame photos (they could be directly out of the front pages of tomorrow's newspapers) displaying corpses (including Ben) being piled high into human waste piles ready to be burned.

As an involving midnight/drive-in/cult movie, *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* succeeds only too well. It is scary, violent, suspenseful, stomach-turning, and involving. This most audiences readily admit. What most audiences fail to observe is that *LIVING DEAD* is also, in its own bargain-basement way, apocalyptic.

Ten years later, emerging with a substantially inflated budget and a superior technical crew, 1978 brought George A. Romero's first sequel, *DAWN OF THE DEAD*, to movie theater screens across America. In a daring political move, refusing to edit the excessive gore for an "R" rating, nor accepting the pornographic "X" rating, Romero released the film "NR"— not rated, supposedly assuring a quick, commercial death. Surprisingly, the film received major distribution with accompanying program books and tee-shirts sold inside theater concession stands. *DAWN OF THE DEAD* ushered in the era of ultra-gore, becoming, if nothing more, a water-shed film daring to transcend accepted taste and the strong political arms of the MPAA rating board. But like *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* before it, *DAWN* succeeded not only by being irreverent and tasteless for its "party-hardy" adolescent audience, it succeeded on artistic intent and its ability to communicate a message to its violence-induced audience.

Probably due more to increased budget than any other factor, *DAWN OF THE DEAD*'s social strata have expanded from the original boundaries of the "outside" world, the "upper" level, and the "subterranean" level. *DAWN* introduces the three levels of "helicopter in flight"— the only safe place to be —which obviously flies over the zombie-infested, dying world of the living. On land, at the suburban mall, the living intelligence once again occupy the "upper" levels while the living dead occupy the "subterranean" levels of the shopping center. Once our four protagonists— two SWAT members and two media people —barricade themselves in the tunnel-storage network above the mall, the main stairwell leading up to sanctuary is totally ignored and declared off-limits even by humans so that ghouls will never gain access to the upper level, not even by accident.

Since *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* ended, human society is crumbling as the dead are literally over-running the living. The TV station, now becoming the symbol of rational society, has only one goal

IN *DAWN OF THE DEAD* (1978), the ghouls exhibit signs of intelligence





-to remain broadcasting. Again playing a cameo role early on, Romero portrays a television director attempting to keep his station on the air, but the sense of panic and disintegration is prevalent. On a much more personal level the federal government, via the media, states, "Citizens may not any longer occupy private residences ...no matter how well protected or stocked." One station technician announces, "We'll be off the air by 12- that's when emergency networks take over...our responsibility is finished." Our "home, sweet home" is outlawed, and the government is taking over the air-waves. Certainly, civilization has crashed in the wake of necessary totalitarianism.

However, Romero's most meaningful sequence, and one of the most visually repellent (making it a definite crowd-pleaser), is the SWAT invasion of an inner-city tenement building, trying to apprehend Martinez, a "generic" minority outlaw. As the professional police army infests the dilapidated apartment building, many innocent residents huddle together as gun blasts tear the walls out. As the SWAT team attacks, assorted policemen yell, "Low-life bastards...Blow all their PR and Nigger asses! Big ass fancy hotel- this is better than I got!" When one policeman is shot through the forehead, a fellow officer goes "ape shit" breaking into apartments at random savagely murdering innocent dwellers, cutting them down with automatic weapon blasts. "Come on you little bastards...tee, hee!" he sadistically giggles, totally excited by his own indiscriminate violence. Wearing gas masks and uniforms, the police army resembles insects. They definitely look alien, as the scurrying SWAT members try to subdue their renegade member.

Immediately thereafter, one innocent tenement victim, shot to death only moments earlier, suddenly and violently returns to un-life. SWAT members are overcome by fright; one is even too terrified to shoot the dead "thing" in the head. Momentarily, he points his weapon toward his temple and blows his own brains out. Juxtaposed to earlier scenes of human savagery with the police ravishing innocent people, we now have scenes of the same SWAT team just as callously and casually "wasting" armies of the dead.

Down in the "subterranean" level, the building's basement, bodies of the recent dead are temporarily buried as the tenement's elderly black minister says last-rites over their bodies. Our two future major characters, black Peter and white Roger (a continuing motif in each of Romero's three zombie films) decide to "run" to save their own necks in the safety of a friend's helicopter (enter Stephen and Francine, two employees of the recently discussed TV station). Before Roger and Peter put these victims of the zombie epidemic back to permanent rest, they are confronted by the minister himself: "You are stronger than us, but soon, I think, they be stronger than you...we must stop the killing or lose the war!" When Roger asks Peter why these corpses were stored here in the first place, Peter responds, "Because these people still believe there's respect in dying."

Perhaps more vividly and powerfully expressed than it ever has or ever will be expressed, Romero has brilliantly transposed *DAWN OF THE DEAD* made a suburban shopping mall into an arena of the dead - note the ghoul wearing nothing but Bermuda shorts



Even children are not spared the "un-dead" fate in Romero's *DAWN*

the police brutality of human beings to the brutality of the living dead without missing a beat. This sequence has both the purpose and effect of desensitizing the audience against future scenes of extreme violence and mutilation. The audience is at first horrified, sickened, and repulsed by sequences of ultra-violence, but pretty soon it accepts such sequences, sits wide-eyed when even more outrageously squeamish and debilitating gore sequences emerge, and finally, the audience applauds future visceral violence. The audience, as manipulated by grue-master Romero, has acquired the same hard-shell that allows it to not only accept but relish the dissection of human flesh just as the SWAT team portrayed on screen enjoyed blood-shed for its own reward. [Also, the SWAT team learns that turn-about is indeed fair play as the same violence that they at first initiated is now directed against them!] Just as *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* reminded its audience of the disrespect that the living holds for the dead (Johnny's complaint of having to place a wreath on his father's grave), *DAWN OF THE DEAD* again reminds the audience of this sacrilege down in the basement of a tenement building where the poor, who cannot do more, respectfully remember their dead.

But even the living dead fail to remain static, non-thinking, non-feeling human residue in Romero's vision. They too are evolving. Once situated atop the mall, our four major characters wonder why the dead eerily circulate in a morbid mimicking of action carried on in regular life. One human survivor notes, "A memory, instinct...this place was important in their lives." Creating one of Romero's most powerful images, these human survivors activate the mall's operations room turning on lights, music, and sales promotions as the grotesque, decaying dead emotionlessly saunter about, oddly contrasted to equally expressionless mannequins. Ghouls, in herky-jerky spurts, walk into glass walls, stumble into vegetative ponds flopping around, and tumble down escalators. The images of the ghouls themselves are startling as well as humorous: an over-weight zombie wears nothing but Bermuda shorts, a head-shaven Hare Krishna bangs a tambourine (whose blank expression looks exactly the same, living or dead), and a solitary out-of-place nun represent only a few odd examples. Several zombies even attempt to play hockey.

But though Romero utilizes such stereotyping for both humorous and shocking effect, his legion of the dead has become an evolving species no longer members of the human family. One lone media broadcast offers, "Are these cannibals- no. This is interspecies activity...they prey on humans, but not on each other...that's the difference." A hint of intelligence is next touched upon: "...seemingly little reasoning power- but skills remain basically remembered from their normal life." The ghouls are finally described as being "motorized instinct- not family members or friends."

Sometimes Romero humorously reminds us of the savagery contained within the human species which rivals or even surpasses the violence of the living dead. Earlier, before arriving atop the mall, the helicopter safely travels over rural Johnstown. An occupant of the copter declares, "These rednecks are probably enjoying the whole thing" as the audience partakes in a brief interlude of hunters loading up, swigging beer, and taking pot-shots at zombies as weekend sport. Later Peter, coming down from ceiling paneling





Above: Even if the living members of the tenement building respect their dead in *DAWN OF THE DEAD*, the dead certainly do not respect the living; Opposite: Howard Sherman as Bub, a zombie who is being "re-taught" the essence of humanity from *DAY OF THE DEAD* (1985) above, drops into a sporting goods store to apprehend an arsenal of weapons and ammo and is startled by several mounted animal heads on the wall reminding the viewer of a similar trophy room sequence from *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, as well as reminding the viewer of accepted instances of actual human violence directed against our friendly other-species "children" of nature.

After the foursome has "conquered" the mall, after having destroyed the majority of zombies within (two huge 12-wheeler trucks are used to block the main entrances), "civilization" intervenes with clean-up detail initiated disposing of corpses, new raids on the mall for hair-cuts and new clothes, and finally, Stephen and Francine enjoy an eloquent candlelight dinner. But this respite is fleeting, and as the foursome stand over the deserted mall, the thumping of ghouls pounding to enter heard in the distance, Peter intuitively reveals, "They don't know why- they just remember.. remember they want to be here...they're after the place." Finally remembering the prophetic words of his Voodoo priest grandfather, Peter glumly reveals, "When there's no room left in Hell, the dead will walk the Earth." Thus Romero has created a pivotal image of his zombie-infested world: the apocalyptic vision of literal hell-on-Earth, the hell created by human cruelty and insensitivity. Humanity has made its bed of dread and must consent to lie in it. Francine asks, "What are they?" Peter responds, "They're us...there's no more room in Hell."

Shortly after this facade of normalcy is erected, the reality of hell-on-Earth swiftly returns. Roger (the victim of an outside zombie attack), slowly dying on a mattress repeatedly being injected with large doses of morphine, an earlier victim of his own self-confidence and carelessness, screams and tells Peter, "You take care of me when I go...I don't want to be walking around...like that! Don't do it until you're sure I'm coming back- I'm gonna try not to...come back!"

Interspersed to Roger's death agony is the final TV broadcast: the station is in obvious disarray, on-camera interviewers hold bottles of beer in hand, and the interviewed scientist-guest yells at his mini-audience to shut up. "Brains are already dead and the idiots are alive...I'm trying to help you dummies," he raves. His suggestions include feeding the dead in order to control them and "nuking" all major cities to wipe out the pestilence (the baby as well as the bath water).

As the broadcast continues, Roger dies, returns to ghastly un-life, and as Peter fires the shot ending his reanimation to hell-on-Earth, the scientist, over the air-waves, pleads with his audience, "We've got to remain rational; there's no choice. It's that or the end!" The truth has never been more acutely generated via Romero's skillful technique that humanity has fallen, the dead have over-taken the living.

Soon, the motorcycle raiders, a professional army of bikers, invade the mall, breaking through the entrance, allowing thousands of zombies to enter and over-take the mall. These crazed, irrational, and fun-loving hedonists represent our culture's "jock"-aesthetic



to the hilt. For the cycle gang, the zombies are easy prey- ridiculously so. Motorcycle raiders enjoy pelting zombies with pies in the face and shooting Seltzer water in their hair because zombies fail to offer any real resistance. Thus, when leader Tom Savini finds the mall protected by a human army of living warriors, his face becomes dementedly thrilled with the prospect of a real, challenging encounter. The acts of violence committed by armies of the dead are no worse than the joyful violence committed on them by these depraved human survivors armed with sledgehammers and machetes.

Ironically, Stephen, trapped alone in the elevator, seriously wounded by a shot from a cyclist, is overrun by a dozen ghouls who savagely bite him to death. Returning momentarily to resurrected life, Stephen's memory and instincts lead the zombie brigade to the hidden passage leading to the stairwell which leads to the "upper" level of safety and human control. Peter, after putting Stephen to peace, briefly considers putting the next bullet into his temple, but quickly decides to opt for life, shooting ghouls, and running for the safety of the helicopter now manned by rookie pilot Francine. The two fly straight up to momentary safety forsaking the mall which now has been conquered and is controlled by armies of the living dead.

According to George Romero, 1985's *DAY OF THE DEAD*, the final link in the trilogy, was not the film he originally envisioned. Citing an option to receive financing for a big-budgeted picture only if he allowed editing for an "R" rating, the maverick Romero once again rebelled, opted for his almost necessary "NR" rating, and thus received only the partial budget he required to produce the epic apocalyptic finale envisioned in his mind. Due to shoddy distribution which opened the film in very limited, selected film markets sometimes several months apart across the nation (therefore saving money by producing fewer prints which could be recirculated for different city premieres), *DAY OF THE DEAD* never had the opportunity to become the financial blockbuster that *DAWN OF THE DEAD* had been. But even though most genre buffs cite the middle-produced *DAWN* as best of the threesome, *DAY OF THE DEAD*- for its sheer claustrophobic horror, its totally disgusting and utterly believable gore-effects, and its artistic vision -strikes me as the most creatively startling of the bunch.

As Romero the filmmaker becomes more innovative and stylish, some of his earlier flaws as a craftsman become more glaring. For instance, Romero has never utilized recognized professionals





George A. Romero, the father of "splatter," poses with his children from *DAY OF THE DEAD*, the most creatively startling of the trilogy in the cast of any zombie film; at best "adequate" is the kindest word to describe performances by unknowns such as Duane Jones, Ken Foree, or Gaylen Ross. *DAY OF THE DEAD*'s emphasis on over-blown comic book caricatures of real human beings begins to grate on the viewer's sensibilities. However, the performances of Richard Liberty as Dr. Logan (aka Frankenstein) and Howard Sherman as Bub, Romero's first zombie with personality, transcend these typical acting deficiencies on behalf of the rest of the cast. Romero, who has always been more concerned with the visual look of his productions (the cinematography, the special makeup effects including state-of-the-art gore effects created by Tom Savini in the second and third *DEAD* features), stretches his creative talents in *DAY OF THE DEAD* by concentrating more on a talky idea-laden plot and more fully realized characterization of at least a few of the major personalities introduced. But if growth can be observed in *DAY OF THE DEAD* when compared to the far cruder *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, there also exists an on-going continuity of themes and images introduced in the earlier two movies.

On a basic note, just as Romero's name appeared superimposed over the image of an American flag in 1968, in 1985 his name appears superimposed over both the image of a movie theater marquee and over the image of a decaying maggot-infested corpse. Not only has social order deteriorated, but the human species has been wiped out by the time *DAY OF THE DEAD* arrives.

Romero is similarly preoccupied with the "levels" of social strata that his doomsday world exists upon. Beforehand, the ghouls occupied the lower-depths (the cellar, the basement of the tenement building, the ground level of the mall) and humans dominated the upper-levels (with ultimate safety offered only in mid-air via the helicopter). Now, in *DAY OF THE DEAD*, the ghouls dominate the "upper" levels and humans are forced to operate "down below" in the hallowed, subterranean bowels of a nearly deserted underground military installment. But even there, even in the infinite mine shafts, the zombies out-number human beings (Dr. Logan estimates the ghouls out-number humans 400,000 to 1). Thus, the only safety still remains the safety of flight—high above the venom-infested Earth. And even there safety exists only as long as fuel can be found (fuel which is manufactured only by the ever-diminishing living).

Evolving as a visionary filmmaker, Romero cleverly frames his third *DEAD* movie in three disconcerting dream sequences. The first, concerning scientist Sarah (Lori Cardille, the daughter of "Chilly Billy" Cardille, one of the on-screen reporters in the original *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*), involves her alone in a concrete brick room, staring at a calendar that is marked off to October 31. As she slowly reaches out for the calendar, her weary hand outstretched, a sudden explosion of ghastly hands and arms rip through the concrete walls toward her. She suddenly awakens in the safety of the cockpit of a helicopter.

In the middle of the film, after being exposed to Dr. Logan's Grand Guingol operating room of the absurd whereby she witnesses a ghoul (its abdominal cavity opened) attempt to sit up as intestines and stomach entrails flop to the floor, Sarah sits in friend Miguel's



Here makeup/effects artist, Tom Savini, poses in his workshop dubbed "Savini-Land," preparing effects for *DAY OF THE DEAD*. Savini joined Romero with *MARTIN*, an ultra-violence vampire film.

quarters watching this living human being's guts spill out suddenly as he groggily rises from his bed. Sarah suddenly returns to the world of reality shaking off the nightmare.

Then, at *DAY*'s finale, as Sarah and two other survivors run to the copter from one direction, the army of the dead rushing to converge upon the copter from the opposite direction, Sarah is first to reach the security of the helicopter and first to be descended upon by one hungry ghoul already waiting inside the copter. Reality (or is it still a dream, a dream of life as death overtakes her?) intervenes as the survivors are comfortably landed upon a tropical beach fishing as the helicopter sits silently on the beach.

Besides their obvious shock value, these dreams are important for furthering character development and creating interesting visual images. For the first example, feminist Sarah is forced to assume the masculine stereotype of acting hard-as-nails always being in control, but her horrifying and private nightmares (and her reactions to these phantasmagoric interludes) reveal vulnerability hidden below the surface. Secondly, the horrifying image of a ghoul literally spilling its intestines juxtaposed to the image of a perfectly healthy living human doing the same allows the viewer to discover the extent to which our human sensibilities have been hardened, deadened, and desensitized. If the raw disembowelment of a corpse doesn't adversely affect the viewer, perhaps the disembowelment of a living person will. To most gorehounds the difference makes no difference, but this conditioned reflex performed on the viewer allowing him to readily accept human dismemberment without becoming emotionally involved lies at the heart of meaning in the Romero trilogy. This process of watching this dream sequence approximates the process in society at large of humanity becoming something less-than-human. And Romero seems to be implying that this process is not limited to on-screen action alone!

In fact, Dr. Logan and Bub, in a not very subtle replay of the Ygor and Monster relationship from *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*, drive home the theme of the emerging humanity to be found in the living dead compared to increasing levels of savagery to be found in the human animals. As Logan, the mad genius and titular leader of the scientists, is pressured by the military to show practical results of his work, he announces, "I'll show them that these creatures can be domesticated...we can condition them...control them...it's our only hope!"

Trying to condition the ghouls by feeding them military issued "beef treats" which the ghouls (and the living!) refuse to eat, Logan proclaims he is only trying to "...satisfy the urge. They are us, extensions of us, the same animal but functioning less perfectly. They can be tricked into being good little girls and boys...Reward is the key; they must be rewarded!" After the ghoul throws his can of food away, Logan scolds the thing as if it were a naughty little boy: "You can just stand there in the dark and think about what you've done." Logan turns the lights off as the living dead corpse, shackled to the wall, growls.

But Logan's major success, and also the performance surprise of the movie, is Howard Sherman's portrayal of Bub, the ghoul that allows Logan to be in close proximity without eying the scientist as a meal. Allowing Bub to examine a paperback copy of *Salem's Lot*, a razor, and a toothbrush, the ghoul remembers and mimics the rote behavior associated with "using" these articles. When Captain Rhodes enters, Bub, who is now examining a telephone, salutes Rhodes recognizing his military dress. The captain refuses to return the salute of this "pile of walking pus."

Bub, more than slightly influenced by Boris Karloff's child-like portrayal of the Monster in *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (Romero even has Bub shackled to three inter-connecting wooden crosses on the wall), successfully creates a sensitive, touching portrayal of a non-living entity remembering pieces of prior existence. This sensitivity is contrasted to the not-so-subtle rehash of returning to the pivotal 'fifties' motif of having the military battle the team of humanitarian scientists. While this typecasting is energetic and fun (the portrayals of military psychos Rhodes, Rickles, and Steel go directly overboard from the start, but still they delight strictly on a comic book level), the smaller relationships existing between Logan and Bub, Sarah and John (the laid-back philosopher), Sarah and Miguel, and John and McDermott are the only ones which ring true. Even Logan and Bub's relationship hits an emotional peak (in a sequence again influenced by *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*) when Bub, wandering aimlessly now free, stumbles upon Logan's machine-gun riddled body (cut down in cold blood when Rhodes discovers Logan "rewarding" Bub with organs from human corpses), emitting screams of vengeance and cries of grief. Shortly thereafter, Bub, armed with a pistol, wounds the fleeing Captain Rhodes as the over-ripe villain crawls down corridors (chewing the scenery every inch of the way) seeking escape. Whetting the audiences' desires, Rhodes opens his door of escape only to run into the awaiting legion of the dead who eviscerate the still conscious and screaming Rhodes, tearing off his legs and lower torso, splitting his guts open, as the ever-advancing Bub salutes the captain one final time.

As this sequence occurs, Sarah and McDermott, later aided by John, are locked behind the safety of the retaining wall and corral deep in the black shadows of the ghoul-infested mine shaft. Here, in this aura of claustrophobia and mood-evoked horror missing since 1968, all hell-on-Earth breaks loose as Tom Savini pulls out all the stops (a ghoul's head is cut in half with a shovel and rolls away...coming to rest- its eyes still open and alert -the top half of the head watches as humans run away) enabling director Romero to mold this sequence of genuine horror, perhaps even making it the crowning sequence of all three DEAD movies. All the elements of the classic horror genre converge here: sympathetic humans, defenseless and unarmed, have to survive in a pitch-black nightmare world where zombies seemingly pop out of every corner out-numbering and overwhelming the human survivors. The ghouls themselves- horribly disfigured, intuitively striving to satisfy their hunger -seem even more monstrous in this virtual underground funhouse from Hell. And against such odds, the humans miraculously Miguel, using himself as human bait, lures the living dead down into the underground military installment from *DAY OF THE DEAD*



survive. Amid atmospheric chills and ultra-gore, Romero (with Savini's invaluable assist) has crafted the ultimate nail-biting, popcorn crunching sequence of his career.

But *DAY OF THE DEAD* has its philosophical component as well! John and McDermott, seemingly the disinterested observers of the war of nerves between scientists and military personnel, live in an isolated trailer (labeled "the Ritz") which is decorated to appear as a paradise island hideaway complete with tropical backdrops and beach umbrella. John, the once-again noticeable black hero, is the duo's philosophic mouthpiece: "We don't believe in what you're doing here. They got the defense department budget down here; they got the negatives of all your favorite movies; they got microfilmed tax reports, immigrant records, reports of natural disasters...what does it matter? We are a 14 mile tombstone with an epitaph no one will bother to read- relics of what once was!...We've been punished by the Creator. He put a curse on us so we might get a look at what Hell was like. Maybe he didn't want to see us blow ourselves up and put a big hole in His sky. He wanted to show us he was the "boss man"- too big for our britches trying to figure his shit out!"

Continuing to echo his philosophy (or Romero's?), John's solution is a simple one: "Time is all we got left, you know. Plenty to do...get some babies and teach 'em never to come here to dig these records out."

At *DAY OF THE DEAD*'s end, three survivors- Sarah, John, and McDermott -are lazily watching birds fly over the bleached white tropical sand as fishing rods bob in the blue currents. Reality... or simply another dream? Sarah, who marked the end of October in the film's beginning dream sequence, just as dutifully marks off November 4 at the film's end.

Obviously writer/director (and sometimes editor) Romero never envisioned these thematic complexities 17 years before *DAY OF THE DEAD* when *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, made on a shoe-string, was first released to the drive-in circuit. As each film evolved out of commercial necessity, so did the evolution of a doomsday world vision. One can only wonder what must be Romero's reaction to psyched-up gorehounds who merrily scream for more intense sequences of visceral violence as the demands of gore-master Tom Savini are increasingly put to the test. These same gorehounds embody the qualities of desensitized humanity (put forth in these films) who have fallen as the dominant species on our planet as the agonized, seemingly infinite numbers of the dead rise up as hell-on-Earth reminds a few human survivors of paradise lost...forever. When Romero has characters in the second and third features describe the ghouls as "they are us," perhaps he was speaking directly to his adrenaline-charged audience. For as the final chapter in the trilogy makes clear, the ghouls are evolving into somewhat noble creatures slowly relearning the essence of humanity while the human species, rapidly dying off, have regressed to primitive levels of savagery thus becoming this series' ultimate villains.

Asked to react to the appeal of these zombie films, Romero, with a sly smile, muttered matter-of-factly in a recent video tape interview: "It's a good time!"

**MIDNIGHT MARQUEE/GORE CREATURES BACK ISSUE DEPARTMENT:** The following back issues are still available for \$3.50 apiece - issue #34, 33, 32, and 31. The following issues are virtually out of print. We only have a few copies of each to sell. Therefore, the price is \$15 apiece. These will move rapidly! Issue #25, 24, 23, 21, 19, and 17. The following issues are totally sold out. However, we are now offering professionally photo-copied mint reproductions of the following rare issues. This may be the only way readers will ever see these rare seldom-seen early issues. They are available for \$10 apiece. Issue #22, 20, 19, 18, 16, 15, 14, and 13. Send your orders to Richard Svehla, 4000 Glenarm Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21206 today!

**WHAT DO YOU WISH TO SEE MORE OF IN MIDNIGHT MARQUEE?** Less of? What types of articles should we run? What stars or directors should be featured? What "lost classics" should be profiled in future issues? Should we have more or less interviews? Should we initiate any new features, or drop any of the current ones? Should we run more art/less art?

Our staff is here to serve our readership. Write MidMar and share your ideas. We always listen!



# UNIVERSAL'S "GOLDEN AGE"

## Some Facts & Figures

by Greg Mank



Over the decades, many caressing words have hailed the aesthetics of Universal's "Golden Age" horror classics. Writers have waxed eloquently about the demonic charisma of Lugosi's Count, the haunting bewilderment of Karloff's Monster, the maniacal bravura of Rains' Invisible Man, and the spastic primping of Elsa Lanchester's Bride. Indeed, as these wonderful movies and performances became legends, there's developed a romantic tendency to consider all these films as affectionately-pampered children of Universal—each spoiled lovingly by "Uncle Carl" Laemmle, his producer son "Junior," and the front office.

Not so. At Universal, all horror films were not, in the eyes of the almighty Laemmles, created equal—and recently unearthed production information from Universal's archives tells the tale. Facts and figures tell a saga of a studio, naturally hellbent on making profits, caught up in the true Hollywood fashion of politics: allowing one director carte blanche while mercilessly riding another; permitting one movie to wander lavishly over schedule and budget, while others were hounded to quick completion; awarding one star munificently for his talents, while scrimping on another.

This feature can't cover all Universal's shockers. However, what follows is a sampling of movies, noting Universal's Machiavellian actions and attitudes on some of its most popular and lovingly dissected horror tales.

DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN, of course, must be the standard bearers for comparison as to Universal's budgets and shooting schedules. Universal originally budgeted DRACULA at a quite lavish \$355,050, with a 36-day shooting schedule. The Tod Browning picture began in "the peasant hut" and at the back lot inn September 29, 1930, and ended with "pick-ups" November 15, 1930—6 days over schedule. Nevertheless, DRACULA came in at a recorded final cost of \$341,191.20, over \$13,000 under budget. ["Added scenes" shot December 13, 1930, and "retakes" in Dracula's chambers and Seward's office filmed January 2, 1931, ate into this balance.]

As for FRANKENSTEIN, Universal provided a \$262,007 budget, and a 30-day schedule. James Whale went 5 days over schedule,

beginning shooting on the churchyard set August 24, 1931, and ending with extra shots of the tower laboratory October 3, 1931. Universal eventually charged \$291,129.13 against its powerhouse hit, putting the classic more than \$29,000 over budget.

As Universal enjoyed the bonanza created by DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN, the studio trusted that future horror hits would require much less investment. [THE MUMMY, for example, came in at a cost of \$196,000.] All in all, every film had its own relationship with the front office, and the following are examples:

### MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE (1932)

If young French director Robert Florey felt that MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE would prove to Universal that it had erred in giving FRANKENSTEIN to James Whale (after Florey had written the original adaptation and directed the Lugosi tests), his hopes were in vain. The production was wracked with trouble from beginning to end.

It's all been documented how Universal, in financial peril before the release of FRANKENSTEIN, had wanted to economize on MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE, demanding a modern setting—hence saving on sets and costumes. Adaptor/director Florey, already stung by FRANKENSTEIN, walked out, so Universal restored Poe's 19th century setting. However, the studio retalisted with a budget of only \$164,220 (almost \$100,000 less than the original budget for FRANKENSTEIN, and \$190,000 less than the original figures for DRACULA). Shooting began October 19, 1931, on the set of the Morgue. However, shooting didn't proceed promisingly, and only 8 days later, Florey was already filming "retakes" of the scenes in Miracle's tent. The movie ran 5 days over its 18-day shooting schedule, "wrapping" November 13, 1931.

Meanwhile, FRANKENSTEIN was playing sensational previews. Junior Laemmle felt Florey's film so inferior to Whale's shocker that he ordered MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE back into production for "retakes" and "added scenes"—\$21,870 worth! Florey began shooting the new footage December 10. The work included several nights on the back lot, filming the climactic chase of Camille and Erik the Ape over the Paris rooftops. On December 22, 1931,





signed for one of the highest salaries paid a horror star at Universal for playing the cursed Dr. Wilfried Glendon- \$2750 per week for 4 weeks' work. [Hull obviously had clout at Universal City. The Picture Talent sheet also provided \$330 as a "Special Arrangement" with Hull's agent, and a mysterious \$1375 for Hull's "Trick Shots."] However, Warner Oland, cast as lycanthropic Dr. Yorgani, was originally set for the highest fee- \$12,000 for 3 weeks' time. The lovely Valerie Hobson, Universal's most overworked starlet of 1935, played Hull's wife Lisa while simultaneously playing Elizabeth in BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN.

Director Walker completed THE WEREWOLF OF LONDON 4 days over schedule, at a cost of \$195,393.01- more than \$36,000 over budget. The movie opened in New York one day previous to BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, was overshadowed by it, and today is eclipsed by the more popular 1941 THE WOLF MAN.

#### THE RAVEN (1935)

After THE BLACK CAT scored so handsomely at the box office, Universal was hellbent on producing another "KARLOFF and Bela LUGOSI" frightfest- and at the same cut-rate price. The original budget of THE RAVEN, Universal Production #734, was \$109,750, only about \$16,000 more than what had so sparingly been afforded THE BLACK CAT.

Most of this difference was due to script trouble, for at least 7 writers had come and gone, trying to adapt Poe's immortal poem into a screenplay. Guy Endore (who contributed to MGM's THE MARK OF THE VAMPIRE) earned \$700 for the first try; Clarence Marks earned \$887.50 for bastardizing the poem further; one "M. Simons" earned \$2133.35 for taking yet another stab at it; Jim Tully, popular Hollywood hack, took home \$5083.35 for his futile attempt; John Lynch made \$1750 for his efforts. It was David Boehm, finally, who received screen credit for his serviceable scenario, which earned him \$5375. Even Dore Schary, fated to replace Louis B. Mayer as head of MGM, earned \$233.36 for some late flourishes on THE RAVEN's script.

Shooting began March 20, 1935, on a 15-day schedule, under the production of David Diamond and the direction of Louis Friedlander (aka Lew Lenders), who was making his feature debut (after several serials) on THE RAVEN- for the fee of \$900. Bela Lugosi, in the dominant role of Dr. Vollin, signed for a 5-week work period, at \$1000 per week. Karloff, as Lugosi's disfigured victim Edmond Bateman, had a role only half Lugosi's size, yet earned exactly twice Lugosi's salary- for a 4-week work period, at \$2500 per week.

Friedlander completed THE RAVEN April 5, 1935, right on the 15-day schedule, at a final cost of \$115,209.91- over \$5000 over budget. THE RAVEN opened the 4th of July in NYC, and, of course, was a hit- despite a particularly vehement critical onslaught.

#### THE INVISIBLE RAY (1936)

The third and last of Universal's "KARLOFF and Bela LUGOSI" vehicles, Universal's Production #763 originally received a budget of \$166,875- a fairly respectable figure, and about two-thirds more than had been allotted THE BLACK CAT and THE RAVEN. Karloff, in the showy role of vengeful, radium-poisoned Dr. Janos Rukh, had hit a weekly Universal salary of \$3125; set for 5 weeks' time on THE INVISIBLE RAY, his fee was estimated at \$15,625. Lugosi, who had to surrender a vacation to Hungary to make the picture, was saddled with the straight foil part of Dr. Felix Benet, and signed for a "flat" fee- \$4000 for 3 weeks' work.

Despite the relatively decent budget, which afforded lovely leading lady Frances Drake, a fine supporting cast (Frank Lewton, Walter Kingsford, Beulah Bondi), and a John Colton screenplay, Stuart Walker- initially set to direct- walked out, protesting the time, script, and budget. Universal economically rushed Lambert Hillyer into the post, at the estimated fee of \$3750. Shooting began September 17, 1935.

As things evolved, Walker might as well have stayed. THE INVISIBLE RAY ran 12 days over schedule, and \$68,000 over budget- most heavily in "cast overtime," "set lighting," "general set expense," and "process shots." Production finally "wrapped" October 25, 1935, at a grand total cost of \$234,875.74- well over double the cost of the first two Boris and Bela frightfests. Released in January 1936, and proclaimed on the poster as "Universal's Weirdest



Drama," THE INVISIBLE RAY proved to be one of the studio's finest melodramas, splendidly mating "gothic horror" with the still-virgin realm of "science fiction."

#### DRACULA'S DAUGHTER (1936)

Universal's original budget for DRACULA'S DAUGHTER was \$230,425, ironically making this often-overlooked film one of the highest-budgeted of the horror classics. Yet much of this money went to people who had little or nothing to do with the finished picture!

R.C. Sherriff, author of *Journey's End* and adaptor of THE INVISIBLE MAN, wrote a continuity for DRACULA'S DAUGHTER, receiving \$10,932.62 ("London payments"), plus \$4756 ("Studio payroll") plus \$961.95 ("Transportation")- yet his name nowhere appears on the credits. Neither does the name of Peter Dunne, who earned \$2350 for working on a script. It was Garrett Fort, who had contributed to the scenarios for DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN, who worked at Universal January 6, 1936, to February 26, 1936 (22 days after shooting began!), and who earned \$6375 and solo scenario credit on DRACULA'S DAUGHTER.

In addition to script complications, Universal had to pay \$17,500 to director Edward Sutherland for "retained time," because studio delays made it impossible for him to direct the picture as planned. Once again, Universal turned to Lambert Hillyer, who took over at a considerably lower fee (\$5400).

Actress Marguerite Churchill, who played the ingenue Janet, also collected \$750 in "accumulation" time due to studio delays. And one noted actor received a salary from DRACULA'S DAUGHTER, although he didn't appear in it at all: Bela Lugosi! Universal had to pay Lugosi \$4000, in "accumulation," for the time he had forfeited while the studio had still planned to cast him in the sequel.

Shooting began February 4, 1936, with a 29-day schedule. Gloria Holden, striking in the title role, was paid \$300 per week. Otto

Kruger, as Jeffrey, was making \$2500 weekly, while Edward Van Sloan, reprising his part of Van Helsing, did so for \$600 per week.

DRACULA'S DAUGHTER ran over its estimated shooting schedule, wrapping March 10, 1936, after 36 days of shooting (on 7-day weeks). The "Revised Final Cost Sheet" of Halloween, 1936, gave the final figure as \$278,380.96, making DRACULA'S DAUGHTER one of the most expensive of all Universal's horror films. The studio released it in May 1936 - a month after the Leemans had passed into exile from Universal, and a new, anti-horror film regime had moved into power.

#### SON OF FRANKENSTEIN (1939)

Because SON OF FRANKENSTEIN is hailed as the "epic" of Universal's Frankenstein saga, most historians assume that Producer/Director Rowland V. Lee meticulously blueprinted it. Nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, in the post-Leemans era (where "horror" resumed after the highly successful re-issue of DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN in 1938), probably no horror film gave Universal's front office so many nightmares as did this third entry in the Monster series.

SON OF FRANKENSTEIN began shooting November 9, 1938, under a great handicap - there was no script. Lee had thrown out the original Willis Cooper draft (with a talking Monster). To meet the arranged release date and get the value out of a high-priced cast already collecting salary, Universal demanded that shooting begin anyway. The studio vaguely based its time and money projections on Lee's production of 1938's SERVICE DE LUXE, hoping for a 27-day shooting period and a \$300,000 budget.

Lee, however, was by no means intimidated by Universal's front office. With stars Basil Rathbone (then one of the world's highest paid actors, earning circa \$5000 a week), Karloff as the Monster

(the actor's going rate was then \$3750 a week), and Lugosi (whose recent unemployment had resulted in Universal's bullying him into a \$500 per week deal to play Ygor), plus Lionel Atwill, Josephine Hutchinson, and a large cast, Lee mischievously took his time - virtually making up the movie as he went along. Originally, Universal hoped Lee would complete the film December 10. On that date, Lee told the office he'd be able to finish the movie Christmas Eve. Then he said December 28. About 1:15 a.m., January 5, 1939, Lee finished SON OF FRANKENSTEIN at a final cost of \$420,000.

Almost miraculously, Universal's Editorial, Music, and Sound Departments worked so industriously (and with such overtime) that Universal was able to preview SON OF FRANKENSTEIN on the night of January 7, 1939 - less than 70 hours after Lee finally completed the film. The picture opened at Hollywood's Pantages Theatre January 13, 1939, and was a giant success. Lee went on to produce and direct THE SUN NEVER SETS and TOWER OF LONDON at Universal in 1939, with both movies running over schedule and over budget, although not as monstrously as did SON OF FRANKENSTEIN.

#### HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944)

In conclusion, we jump ahead to this popular "Monster Rally" of 1944 - and one of the best testimonials to Universal's "efficiency first" factory of the War Years.

Following Karloff's triumph on Broadway and national tour in Arsenic and Old Lace, the star signed a 12-week, \$60,000 star contract with Universal. The first 8 weeks and \$40,000 were to go to THE CLIMAX; the remaining 4 weeks and \$20,000 were scheduled for a "picture to come." For this "picture to come," Universal quickly prepared THE DEVIL'S BROOD (as HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN was originally titled). On a 30-day schedule and a \$354,000 budget, the film was designed to employ Karloff for exactly the 4 weeks he would owe Universal. The fifth and final week of shooting would be saved for those Dracula sequence scenes which didn't require Karloff's presence, and for a Cheney Wolf Man transformation.

Karloff's \$20,000 made him, by far, the best-paid star of the movie. Lon Cheney, who of course was under contract to Universal, received a "flat" \$10,000 for his third go-round as the Wolf Man. John Carradine, as Dracula, received \$3500 per week on a 2-week guarantee; J. Carroll Naish, as the hunchbacked Daniel, received special billing on the credits and \$1750 per week for 4 weeks' work. Glenn Strange, in his first appearance as the Monster, signed for only \$250 a week, on a 2-week period (although Universal "carried" him for an extra week after he completed his scenes).

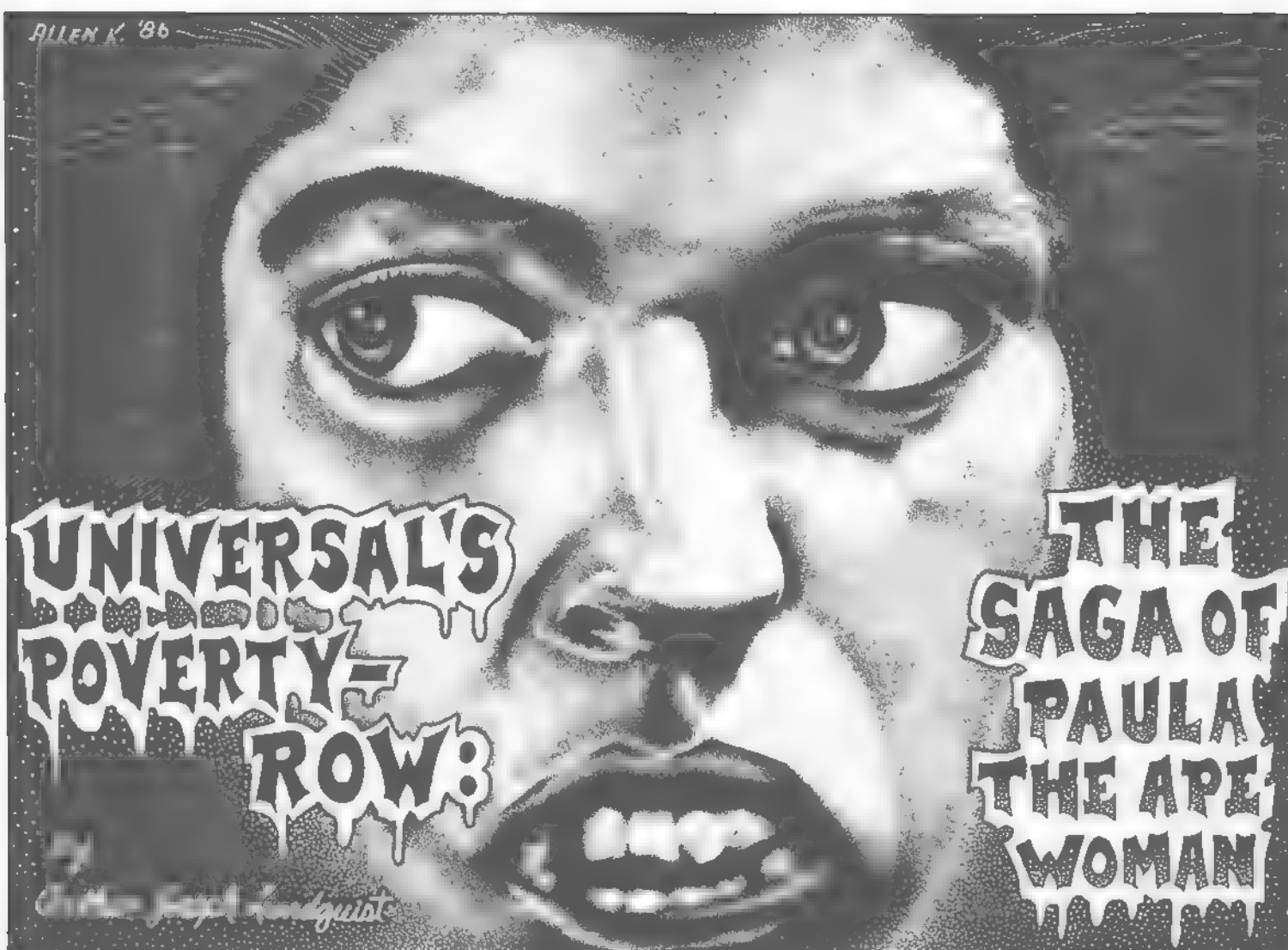
Director Erle C. Kenton completed HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN on location at "Sherwood Forest," near Los Angeles (where he filmed shots of Carradine, Anne Gwynne, and Peter Coe for the Dracula chase) on May 8, 1944 - exactly on the 30-day schedule. Universal released HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN December 1944, in competition with the horror films of RKO's Val Lewton - who produced his terror tales in about half the time and with about half the budget Universal had allotted HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN.

WANTED: The Editor is looking to trade for the following horror movie posters/lobbies/window cards: the 1947 Universal Reissue one-sheet from DRACULA [might also be interested in 22"x28", 14"x36" as well]; an original lobby card from the 1931 DRACULA - card must feature a good Lugosi scene; the title lobby card or the only lobby scene featuring the Invisible Man in bandages from the original INVISIBLE MAN - also interested in the window card; and assorted good lobby cards from other 1930s classic horror - the March DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, DR. X, MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM, ISLAND OF LOST SOULS, INVISIBLE MAN, THE RAVEN, etc. I have a beautiful original lobby from the 1931 FRANKENSTEIN to offer in trade, as well as other material. If you are selling only, send me a description of the item and the price. Write or phone: Gary J. Svehla, 504 Elmwood Road, Baltimore, MD 21206 phone: 301-665-1198 [4 p.m. - 10 p.m. weekdays, anytime weekends]

WANTED: I am interested in musical lobby cards/posters. I am especially interested in the following items: 22"x28" poster from SINGING IN THE RAIN; Judy Garland lobby cards from the 1940s; and posters/lobbies [reissue is fine] from WIZARD OF OZ. Also need Shirley Temple lobbies from her classic early titles, and I need lobbies from THE PHILADELPHIA STORY. Write or phone: Susan Svehla - address/phone above!







In 1943, Universal Pictures launched their last original monster. It was just another "B" film, cranked out in the studio salt mines to earn a few bucks and be forgotten. It wasn't particularly original or memorable. Universal released better movies that year. But perhaps the health of a studio is best gauged by the care it takes in its mediocrities.

CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN opens with credits in white letters against a background of billowing fog. A final title credit—"We hereby make grateful acknowledgment to Mr. Clyde Beatty for his cooperation and inimitable talent in staging the thrilling animal sequences in this film."—prepares us to see an astounding amount of lion taming footage clipped from a 1933 Universal feature, THE BIG CAGE. Spliced inbetween we are introduced to the "love interest" having a dockside reunion after a two-year safari (thus eliminating the need to waste footage developing a love story): lion tamer Fred Mason (Milburn Stone)—typical Universal hero—reasonably handsome, reasonably athletic, sensitive, and a brick (who from the back sort of resembles Clyde Beatty); Beth Coleman, typical Evelyn Ankers-style heroine (played by Evelyn Ankers). To create audience identification for this pair of strangers, Mason heroically drives back an escaped tiger (tiger walking footage run in reverse).

Before the audience has time to wonder if this is really a circus film, Beth narrates in a flashback how she took her sister Dorothy (Martha MacVicar) to the Crestview Sanatorium during a storm in the middle of the night. Dorothy, suffering from "some sort of a glandular trouble" is being left in the care of Dr. Sigmund Walters (John Carradine), renowned endocrinologist who "has furthered not one but three attempts at racial improvement."

After some more circus footage we discover that Dr. Walters' goal is to prove that "glands can transform physical matter into any size, shape, or appearance...if we've been able to create through the medium of glandular extractions such specimens as

we have, what's to prevent us transferring these glandular extractions from a human being into a higher type of animal?"

One such higher animal is Cheela, a female gorilla recently captured by Mason. [Combining gorillas and glands had occurred so often in movies, radio melodramas, and pulps that by 1943 it was practically a reflex action. Universal's last original monster was almost a ready-made creation.] Dr. Walters kidnaps Cheela with the aid of a disgruntled ex-handler (Paul Fix) who dies in the gorilla's paws while Dr. Walters watches smiling.

In his laboratory, Dr. Walters infuses huge amounts of Dorothy's blood into Cheela. We see that laboratories have changed a great deal at Universal. The gothic instrumentation of THE INVISIBLE MAN (1936), has demystified via THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS (1939), modernized to the Con Ed sub-station look of MAN MADE MONSTER (1941). Expressionism is discarded in the name of "realism." It's not just that budgets are getting lower, but independent "Bs" like THE APE MAN (1943) and THE MONSTER MAKER (1944) still use laboratories of deliberate artificiality, the frame filled with strange bottles and bubbling beakers against a background of obviously painted flats.

But at Universal, efforts are being spent to make everything look more "real." Every object in Dr. Walters' laboratory might have come from any movie doctor's office. Of Universal's old expressionism, all that remains are the shadows. Veteran photographer George Robinson (THE INVISIBLE RAY) wraps them around every sanatorium set.

For the audiences of a World War, all of Universal's horror series were shifting away from the gothic, moving closer to Hollywood realism. THE MUMMY'S HAND (1940) has left Egypt for the American swamps of THE MUMMY'S TOMB (1942). London werewolf Henry Hull has become American werewolf Lon Chaney Jr. 1943 found even SHERLOCK HOLMES IN WASHINGTON. The psychological sets of SON OF FRANKENSTEIN

(1939) have hiked westward to *HOUSE OF DRACULA* (1945), reaching all the way to Sepulveda Boulevard by the time *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* (1948). With each year the supernatural became less "super" and more natural, evolving into "Inner Sanctum" mysteries, as if the studio felt their war-weary audiences becoming uneasy with the unknown.

The centerpiece of the laboratory scenes, if not of the whole film, is John Carradine. Surrounded by uninspired actors, Carradine's voice is a delight, cutting over every other voice on the soundtrack, commanding us to pay attention to even the most banal "hello" and "oh, thank you."

Nothing better illustrates the imagination Carradine brings to Dr. Walters than the scene of him and his assistant Miss Strand (Fay Helm) watching the gorilla head of Cheela turn human (courtesy of a series of rather clumsy lap dissolves). Dr. Walters stares at the head in awed disbelief, oblivious to the horror of his assistant:

**Dr. Walters:** (As if he doesn't believe it himself) We've done it. (A smile comes to his face. He turns to Miss Strand, sharing his elation, cries) We've done it!

**Miss Strand:** Oh, Dr. Walters, we can't go on with it.

**Dr. Walters:** (Still elated) Why not?

**Miss Strand:** In the past I've been willing to help you in your experiments with animals, but this is different. I can't have my hands stained with human blood.

Dr. Walters disregards her with an angry sigh.

**Top:** "You are Paula Dupree." Carradine unwraps Cheela's bandages

to reveal the gorilla transformed into a beautiful woman (Acquanetta);

**Bottom:** During one of those accidents that happen whenever Mason (Milburn Stone) goes near the lions, Paula saves his life gingerly

**Miss Strand:** Look at this girl. Slowly but surely you're sapping the life out of her. It's murder doctor; you can't do it.

**Dr. Walters:** (With innocence, amazed at her concern, as if the thought had never occurred to him) Why should a single life be considered so important? (He listens patiently)

**Miss Strand:** Look Dr. Walters, for 13 years I've worked with you, shared your experiments, watched you gain the highest honors in the field of endocrinology. I've seen you gain control over the physical characteristics of men, and changed the breed and sex of animals. I've listened to your dreams of creating a race of supermen.

**Dr. Walters:** (Reasonable) Isn't that a laudable intent?

**Miss Strand:** But while you've been doing this you've lost sight of something else.

**Dr. Walters:** (A touch of impatience creeping into his voice) And that is?

**Miss Strand:** Yourself. I saw it start and watched it grow. Watched a brain that once was fine and brilliant begin to wrap. And tamper with things no man or woman should ever touch.

**Dr. Walters:** (Firm, but reasonable) Now maybe you'll listen to me. Haven't I proved beyond a doubt that glands can transform physical matter into any size, shape, or appearance?

**Miss Strand:** Yes you have, but in doing this, when you took the glands from the guinea-pig and grafted them into the rabbit, the guinea-pig died. When you grafted the frog's glands into a white mouse, the frog died. And you propose to experiment with an ape and a woman. That woman must eventually die.

**Dr. Walters:** (Hard, unmovable) Then she'll die in the advancement of science.

**Miss Strand:** And suppose your experiment is successful. What will you have? A human form with animal instincts. I won't let you do it! I won't! Please. You must stop!

**Dr. Walters:** (A light twinkles, his voice softens, and he speaks with agreement) You're right, Miss Strand. (Reasonably, logically) My new creation needs the element of mental stability that could only come from the cerebrum of the human being. (With a touch of concern) Miss Coleman is essential to me for continued glandular injections. Transplanting the cerebrum would bring certain death to her. I can't afford that. (A touch of a smile) But you're a woman with a very receptive mind.

**Miss Strand:** No. No! Don't! Stop! Please!!

After years of "B" western villains, Carradine does not have to work to convey evil. He handles this scene with quiet professionalism. His voice has a ring of cold conviction, without the self-parody of Karloff's mad scientists for Columbia [*THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* (1939), *THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES* (1940), etc.] or the excesses of Lugosi. He and Fay Helm bring out subtleties that are not even in the script, which here is simply a collection of lines from previous mad scientist movies.

In her brief role, Fay Helm gives what is known in the business as first rate support. She evokes the same feeling of a woman who has lived with pain being hurt again which she brought to her crippled and abandoned wife in *CALLING DR. DEATH* (1943) and her murdered spinster in *THE WOLF MAN* (1941). And she adds the unscripted subtlety of an unrequited love for Dr. Walters. She plays the entire scene as an appeal to his nonexistent humanity, even infusing such an appeal into her obligatory final scream.

To appreciate the care of Carradine, Helm, and Dmytryk, one need only look at similar scenes between Lionel Atwill and Evelyn Ankers in *MAN MADE MONSTER* or Otto Kruger and Amelia Ward in *JUNGLE CAPTIVE*.

As Dr. Walters transplants Miss Strand's brain into Cheela, a familiar string theme by Hans Selter and an also-familiar electrical drone evoke memories of many Universal laboratories, giving *CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN* that special resonance which connects even the worst Universal horror film.

Carradine unwraps Cheela's bandages to reveal the gorilla transformed into a beautiful woman (Acquanetta), complete with a full head of hair in spite of her recent brain surgery. He gives her a new name and a set of simple instructions:

"You are Paula Dupree. Do you remember what happened? Do you remember anything of your past life? Your mind is my mind. Your every thought is my thought. What I tell you to do, you





will do. What I tell you not to do, you will not do. Do you understand that, Paula Dupree?"

She doesn't respond, but subsequently seems to obey as she is brought to the circus to watch Fred Mason tame lion footage. During one of those accidents that happen whenever Mason goes near the lions, Paula saves his life by rather gingerly running into the cage and forcing a lion to retreat from his fallen body (lion walking footage run in reverse). Impressed with her control over animals, Mason and his smug grin decide to star her in his animal act. In the general enthusiasm that follows, nobody seems to notice that no one has consulted Paula herself. While at first glance this may seem to reveal an early feminist subtext, perhaps it has more to do with a deliberate effort to keep Acquanetta from exchanging dialogue with her fellow actors.

All goes well and Paula looks pretty in carnival two-piece and high heels until she spies Fred and Beth embracing. They don't notice Paula jealously stalk out of the room. Neither does Dr. Walters, who exits on the unjustly unsung line- "I'm sorry; I've been away from the sanatorium too long as it is."

Back in her dressing room, Paula's gorilla flesh comes back. It begins as we see her petulantly pacing, knocking down chairs and dresses as her animal instincts reassert themselves (though to tell the truth, she remains a little too ladylike to appear more than enraged cheesecake). There is a cut to a medium closeup as we watch Paula's face turn black. Cut to a closeup of her hand blackening, both due certainly to the old technique pioneered in Rouben Mamoulian's 1931 *DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE*, of monochromatic makeup and a revolving color filter over the camera lens (the fact that turning black is the first step in becoming a gorilla leads to speculation that we may be witnessing an example of unconscious or even conscious racism). Cut to a shot of Paula approaching a mirror. She opens her lips to reveal sharp teeth. A quick lap dissolve brings more hair down her forehead and eyebrows. Cut to a closeup of her hand as another lap dissolve brings more hair to her hand. A shot of her feet shows they have changed as well.

Paula climbs the wall outside Beth's second-floor bedroom. In a nice closeup we see that more hair has come to her chin and cheeks. For no particular reason, Beth survives the encounter, as we see in a rather pointless expository scene seemingly included only to emphasize the fact.

There follows a fascinating monologue by Dr. Walters delivered to closeups of Paula (we never see them together in the same shot) now in full scale ape-woman makeup, including a flared nose-piece and gorilla gloves, explaining everything that has happened and will happen, delivered with total seriousness and commitment by Carradine:

"Everything I've planned, completely destroyed. All because of your madness, your insane attempt to kill Beth Coleman. You know what the police will do to you if they catch you? No, of course you don't. They wouldn't know it was jungle instinct that urged you to kill a female that stood between you and a mate. They'll put you on trial. Throw question after question at you. Till you won't know what anybody's saying. Then they'll put you in the electric chair. And they'll kill you. All because they won't understand. They can't understand. The one thing I hadn't counted on. That terrific emotion would destroy the new tissues in your gland growths. And I have myself partly to blame. I should have kept you under constant observation...Now I have to do it all over again. Graft new glands into your body...Take another life to keep you in human form."

Atwill and Kruger may be fine actors, but Carradine is a star.

After a scene where Fred and Beth talk about things which we in the audience already know, we find that Fred is going to open his act on a stormy night without Paula. Following more carnival footage, Beth gets a phone call from Dorothy:

"You've got to take me away from here. I'm scared. He's preparing me for another of those operations. Treatments, he calls them...I'm afraid! I won't stay here another minute. Something terrible is going on. I know it. I feel it. Beth!" This would not be worth quoting at such length were it not the only line Dorothy has in the entire film (beyond "I am" and "Well, I" in her first scene). Which may explain why she does not arouse much sympathy.

While Fred tames more lion footage, Beth goes to free Dorothy. She meets Dr. Walters who explains what he's been doing and expresses appreciation for Beth's "clever mind." With a beautifully cold and ruthless look (momentarily revealing Ankers' largely unfulfilled potential for portraying villainesses, outside of *THE PEARL OF DEATH* (1944)), Beth unleshes Paula, now back in the old gorilla suit.

Over a stormy shot of Crestview Sanatorium, we hear the moral- "And so, behind these gates is buried the legend of a mortal, who went beyond the realm of human powers, and tampered with things no man should ever touch."

Given all the handicaps it starts with, *CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN* is really not that bad. Edward Dmytryk, an "A" film director who'd run out of money, manages to avoid a surprising number of pitfalls. He adds zest (some) to a strictly by-the-numbers script from Henry Sucher and J. Griffith Jay (co-creators of *THE MUMMY'S TOMB* and *THE MUMMY'S GHOST*). He uses Acquanetta, who at the time was primarily a model rather than an actress, with the same approach used on models to this day: the "don't act; just be natural" approach, while the other actors act around her. The results are not great, but they are not often embarrassing either.

*THE BIG CAGE* footage is surprisingly well integrated into the new footage with Milburn Stone. The grain difference is not that great, and George Robinson does a good job of matching the lighting and shadows.

Though they don't quite mesh, the sunlit world of the circus does make an interesting contrast with the shadowy world of Dr. Walters. Here, the circus stands in for the normal world, as opposed to the evil of Crestview Sanatorium. Such a contrast is possibly unique in horror films, where the circus is usually a place of strangeness. But in Hollywood, a circus probably felt as normal as anyplace else.

In the words of indispensable Carlos Clarens, "This Monstress had her career extended into two sequels, both dismal..." This is at best an oversimplification of the truth. *JUNGLE WOMAN*, released in 1944, once again opens with credits in white letters against a background of moving fog and the note- "We hereby make Acquanetta, in a "Jungle Woman" studio publicity shot, displays her talent as a model. Her acting approach: "Don't act; be natural!"



grateful acknowledgment to Mr. Clyde Beatty for his cooperation and inimitable talent in staging the thrilling animal sequences in this film." [The use of fog as a credits background is not unique to this series. It is also used in CALLING DR. DEATH and the Basil Rathbone Sherlock Holmes series.] JUNGLE WOMAN begins promisingly with a night time struggle between a man and woman, shown completely by their shadows thrown upon a wall. It seems to end in her death, immediately backed up by a headline- "Dr. Fletcher is held for Coroner's Inquest." We are taken to that inquest, where almost immediately things start to go wrong.

We recognize Milburn Stone and Evelyn Ankers as Fred Mason and Beth Coleman (now Beth Mason), but the scene centers on a Dr. Fletcher (J. Carrol Naish) accused of murdering a woman at his sanatorium. The scene cuts back and forth from his cross examination to a series of unbelievably clumsy reaction shots of people listening.

Dr. Fletcher tells his story. Amid vast amounts of flashbacks to CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN is a new conversation between Fred and Dr. Fletcher giving us fresh information about Cheela:

Mason: Well, I found her on one of my expeditions into the Belgian Congo. You know the natives told me a story of a doctor further back in the interior who'd been experimenting with turning human beings into animals. I was never able to trace the story down but the natives insisted it was true and that Cheela was the result of one of those experiments.

Dr. Fletcher: Uh, there have been many efforts made in that direction. As well as giving animals human qualities by means of various serums.

Which is the first, last, and only time we ever hear anything about Cheela's African origins.

There is more confusion. Flashbacks on top of flashbacks. The very first flashback we see shows the end of CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN, making for bizarre continuity. In Beth's flashbacks she expresses puzzlement about the strange similarities between Paula and Cheela, forgetting how Dr. Walters had explained it all to her.

When the flashbacks end, they have taken up a full third of the picture. [With them goes the last of Hans Salter's music. Henceforth, we hear the sounds of Paul Sawtell, more evocative of final sequels and "Inner Sanctum" mysteries, especially CALLING DR. DEATH, than of the silver age of Universal horror.] The rest begins after Dr. Fletcher has nursed Cheela back to health, whom it turns out was not completely dead at the end of CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN. He has also purchased Crestview Sanatorium, complete with the storm that continues to rage outside it. However, besides the storm, nothing resembles any set we had ever seen. Even the shadows are gone.

Assisting him is Willie (Edward Hyams), whose dialogue ("Aww gee, ahh lonely.") sounds so unlike any other Universal assistant that he was either a case of unexpected originality or an imitation of OF MICE AND MEN's Lenny, perhaps written with Lon Chaney Jr. in mind.

Cheela (whom we never see) disappears from the sanatorium, and Paula Dupree (Acquanetta again) is found aimlessly wandering the grounds. No one can imagine where she came from. Suddenly we are introduced to Dr. Fletcher's daughter, Joan (Lois Collier), and her fiance, Bob Whitney (Richard Davis). They appear out of nowhere, more than half way through the film, but we are expected to accept them and empathize with them as the "love interest," sight unseen. The fact that we do not makes them appear like strangers in their own film.

As soon as Paula sees Bob, her eyes light up and she starts talking, at which point we suddenly understand why Acquanetta was given no dialogue the first time around. A bizarrely unsentimental moment then occurs as Paula stands beside a window sobbing (perhaps a quotation of a similar moment in THE CAT PEOPLE- 1942). Dr. Fletcher hears her and stands by her side. He listens to her pain but makes no move to comfort, to touch, to even speak. He simply observes her, insulated from her pain.

Strange moments like these are caused not by planning, but by the accidental juxtaposition of different cliches with no awareness of what effect might result. By this time at Universal, horror films were not written by creatively attempting to evoke an atmosphere of fear or eeriness. By now they are written like



Top: Carradine and Acquanetta from CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN- After years of B-western villainy, Carradine does not have to work to convey evil; Bottom: Lois Collier and Richard Davis dream of stardom in JUNGLE WOMAN. Did either of them appear in another movie?

any other "B" film, by putting together collections of elements, cliches if you will, that appeared in previous horror films. One such element is the Mad Scientist. Another is the Monster. Other elements are the Assistant, the Love Interest, the Burgomaster, and the Superstitious Peasant. All a screenwriter need do is tie enough of these elements together within a sixty-plus minute running time and he has a horror film. Such thinking was probably responsible for GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN (1942), MARK OF THE VAMPIRE (1935), and THE MUMMY'S GHOST (1944).

Screenwriters Bernard Schubert (MUMMY'S CURSE, FROZEN GHOST- 1945) and Henry Sacher seem to add an element new to Universal. Let us call it the Val Lewton element. Keep the audience in ignorance as to what is really happening, then what they imagine shall be more interesting than what we can show. Or simply stated: a monster you don't see is more frightening than a monster you can see. Right? Thus, to keep the audience guessing, no one is allowed to know what's going on.

Note the effect of this approach with the different performance styles. Acquanetta speaks her lines like an actress performing in a foreign language, with little awareness as to what they mean. Willie, as written, cannot understand the things he hears. Joan and Bob, as previously noted, are insulated from everything. All the competent minor characters work on a constant note of fear and confusion. Everybody talks at each other. No one seems to listen. All except J. Carrol Naish (miles from his hunchback in HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN- 1944), playing Dr. Fletcher on a single note of perpetual bewilderment. They talk like no people have



ever talked, against characterless standing sets where 1944 never intrudes. Thus, scenes pass that tell us nothing, where nothing is communicated, where nobody knows what to do:

George: It gets me, all these goings-on, around here. I don't know what's come over this place.

Miss Gray: I don't know whether to call the police, or what to do.

George: I'm all for waiting for... (Dr. Fletcher enters)

Miss Gray: Oh, Dr. Fletcher. I'm so glad you're back.

Dr. Fletcher: Why? What's happened now?

Miss Gray: I...I guess George can explain better than I.

George: Well sir, it ain't pleasant news. I don't know how to start...

It is almost Theater of the Absurd!

Add to that, the style of direction. The characters in *JUNGLE WOMAN* are constantly walking from one place to another, coming from no place in particular and going nowhere in particular, seemingly with purpose, but as far as the audience can tell, for no conceivable reason. Reginald LeBorg obviously told his actors to simply walk across the set, but the result is to emphasize an atmosphere of aimlessness.

Objectives seem to appear and disappear at random. In one scene, Paula seems to have a goal. As she creeps up behind Dr. Fletcher, she seems to want to kill him. But as soon as he turns around and speaks, that objective disappears. She says, "I am leaving," then goes for his throat. Dr. Fletcher gains irresistible strength and tosses her to the floor. Bob enters. Dr. Fletcher becomes nonchalant; Paula goes docile. Dr. Fletcher mumbles, "Uh, don't misunderstand, son."

The movie becomes a kind of limbo, with people drifting here and there, dying, appearing and disappearing, all at random, like a surrealistic dream.

A good editor can sometimes pull things together and impose some unity (re: *CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN*). But here, especially in a scene (obviously patterned after *CAT PEOPLE*) where Joan is stalked through the woods by Paula, the editor seems to have been left with piles of footage to stitch together, with no idea of how they were originally meant to fit.

Sometimes this approach works like a Dada poem: Bob rows Joan out onto a lake, mouthing "romantic" dialogue as a radio plays smooch music:

Bob: You know what, Joan?

Joan: What?

Bob: If I were God I'd give every Joe like me a canoe, a lake like this, and someone like you.

Joan: If I were God, you know what I'd do?...I'd give every girl like me a...a magic power, take each wonderful moment like this and dust it...with everlasting light.

Bob: I think you've got something there.

At this moment, the music still playing, we are primed to see something romantic. Instead, we get a shot of the water with Paula's hair swimming just below the surface. It is a strangely unsettling image, because it is not frightening, not funny, not fascinating in the way a shot of monster makeup is. Through sheer incompetence, the movie comes up with an image that is...weird.

The structure of *JUNGLE WOMAN* is so strange, that it looks like something went very wrong during production, and the movie had to be pulled together in a state of panic. The result was not a very good film, but it was 60 minutes of movie. Now more than ever, the studios were factories designed to turn out movies. People didn't go to see an individual title; people went to see movies- combat movies, western movies, comedy movies, musical movies. Monster movies. One lousy title wouldn't hurt anybody, not until something better comes along.

Without warning, Dr. Fletcher's story terminates, and the entire cast (including first-billed Ankers and Stone, whom we haven't seen since the *CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN* footage ended, two-thirds of the movie ago) goes down to the morgue to view the body. We get one shot of less than a second's duration (the only glimpse in the entire film) of Paula in her ape-woman state, and the movie ends, with a moral to tie everything together: "The evil that man has wrought shall in the end destroy itself."

Paula returned for one last sequel. After the off balanced structure of *CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN* and the almost complete breakdown



A UNIVERSAL PICTURE

Top: Otto Kruger confronts Jack Pierce's lost Universal monster makeup in *JUNGLE CAPTIVE*. Note how, as with *FRANKENSTEIN*, most of the makeup rests on the upper half of the face; Bottom: Otto Kruger's death at the hands of Acquarretta from *JUNGLE CAPTIVE*

of *JUNGLE WOMAN*, this last film would start to put the pieces back together again. But in doing so it points the way to the end of the Universal horror factory.

*JUNGLE CAPTIVE* (1945) opens with credits in white letters against a photograph of unmoving fog (similar to the credits for *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*). Clyde Beatty receives no mention. The action starts in a completely sunlit laboratory as Mr. (not Dr.) Stendahl (Otto Kruger) and his youthful assistants Don Young (Phil Brown) and Anne Forrester (Amelita Ward) electrically bring a rabbit back to life.

Then the shadow of Rondo Hatton thrown against a morgue wall brings us back to more traditional horror territory. In a slight redressing of the same morgue set from *JUNGLE WOMAN*, we are given a shot of Paula lying in her meat locker in her ape-woman state which is almost (but not quite) identical to the one shot we had of her at the end of her last outing.

We watch Hatton kill the attendant, call for an ambulance, lock the ambulance drivers in a closet, stuff Paula's rigor mortised body in the ambulance, drive it to the country, pack the corpse into a woody station wagon, and send the ambulance over a cliff.

Then a police officer walks into the morgue, finds the two captive ambulance drivers, calls the police who send Detective Harrigan (Jerome Cowan), and Harrigan discovers the body of the morgue attendant in Paula's locker.

Ambulance Driver: But what's he doing in there?

Harrigan: Obvious, isn't it?

A tattered hospital smock from the wrecked ambulance leads Harrigan to Mr. Stendahl's office where Harrigan immediately gives Don the J. Carrol Neish approach from *CALLING DR. DEATH*.

Don: You don't suspect me, do you?

Harrigan: He-he. No. If I did I'd ask you a lot of routine questions like, uh- where were you last night?

I go into all these events in such detail only because the movie actually shows us every one of these things happening, one right after the other, each leading to the next. Such systematic logic comes as a shock after the aimless wanderings of JUNGLE WOMAN. The change is too total to be simply due to a different set of writers. It is as if someone "way up" sent down a memo saying, "This time, when somebody's going someplace, I want to know where he's going, and how he got there!"

Not only is the plot more coherent, screenwriters Dwight Babcock (MUMMY'S CURSE, DEAD MAN'S EYES- 1944) and Webster M. Coates (STRANGE CONFESSION- 1945, and dozens of westerns) bring some wit to the dialogue, which sounds, if not like speech from life, then at least like speech from better movies. Don and Anne are even given a few minutes before establishing themselves as the "love interest." Don ("You can't operate; you're not a surgeon.") Young makes a more perceptive leading man than either Fred ("Oh well, look honey, you're letting your imagination run away with you.") Mason or Bob ("Dear, it was just a bad dream.") Whitney. However, these improvements leave Paula herself in the background, a minor character in her own movie.

Mr. Stendahl brings Anne to his country retreat where she is introduced to his caretaker, Molock (Rondo Hatton), and to the body of Paula.

Anne: It isn't human.

Stendahl: Precisely. This is a man-made creation, an experiment. That's why I had to have the body to prove or disprove my theory of restoring life. After all, I'm not experimenting with a human being. This is an animal; you should recognize it as such.

Anne: But you committed murder to get it!

Stendahl: Oh yes...you see, Molock is a true scientist. He understands the unimportance of a mere life, when it might impede progress.

This scene and the operation montage that follows are closely patterned after the similar scene and montage in CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN, with nominally better dialogue. Unfortunately, a lot of the improved script is defeated by the same slow, uninvolved pace director Harold Young brought to THE MUMMY'S TOMB and FROZEN GHOST.

Snappier direction or tighter editing might have helped. But during the war years, a movie did not need to be interesting. The rubes would swallow anything. A movie did, however, have to be 60 minutes long. JUNGLE CAPTIVE barely fills 63. CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN, stock footage and all, only cleared 61. Thus it was not necessarily in the interest of director or editor to make a better movie.

The saving grace of these scenes is Rondo Hatton. Real-life sufferer from the pituitary disorder Acromegaly (which enlarges some body parts while leaving others unchanged), Hatton had just completed his breakthrough role of "The Creeper" in the Sherlock Holmes thriller, PEARL OF DEATH. Hatton's Creeper became one of Universal's final monsters- the monster who "wears almost no make-up" in HOUSE OF HORRORS, THE BRUTE MAN, and THE SPIDER WOMAN STRIKES BACK (all in 1946)- "Whose face you must see in order to believe there can be one like it." If Paula were a ready-made monster, "The Creeper" took that concept one step further, to stand almost alone as the last gasp of the Universal horror factory.

Hatton had no dialogue in PEARL OF DEATH. We discover why in JUNGLE CAPTIVE. He simply reads his words void of inflection or emphasis. His lines come in on cue, but he seems unaware of what was just said to prompt them, as if Hatton studied only his own sides rather than complete scripts. His blank delivery adds something to lines like, "You gonna put in a new brain?"

If all this sounds familiar, it is because Hatton in PEARL OF DEATH and JUNGLE CAPTIVE is handled the same as Acquafetta was in CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN and JUNGLE WOMAN, respectively. It's a pity they never played a scene together.

Otto Kruger, on the other hand, is a seasoned character actor, bringing menace and humor to Mr. Stendahl. The contrast between his commitment to his words and Hatton's seeming divorce brings a weird flavor to unbelievably insensitive writing like:

Stendahl: Not worried about her...are you, Molock?

Molock: If you take out too much blood, she'll die.

Stendahl: Oh, Molock. I believe you feel sorry for my pretty assistant. Don't be a fool...with that face you're not exactly a Casanova. (Indicates the ape woman) This is more in your line, Molock.

[Babcock would write on both HOUSE OF HORRORS and THE BRUTE MAN, assisted in the latter once more by Coates.]

Stendahl: Well, Molock, all this only proves half a theory.

Molock: What's half a theory?

Stendahl: Well, so far we've brought life back to this...hybrid. If she could be transformed into a woman, then I would have brought back life to a human.

Molock: Then why don'tcha do it?

Under the ape woman makeup is 18 year-old Vicki Lane. Her Paula is livelier and less lady-like than Acquafetta's. She is given a single Jack Pierce makeup throughout, which we in the audience have ample opportunity to study (one of the joys of Universal horror which one doesn't often get from any other studio).

After she turns human, Lane is not as pretty, in a fashion model sense, as Acquafetta. But her eyes are more expressive. Babcock and Coates give her neither dialogue nor transformation scenes (their script was written for Acquafetta, who reportedly turned it down), but what we do see is promising. According to the pressbook: "Miss Lane, one of the few actresses suitable for the part, happened to be the only one who was willing to endure the difficult make-up ordeal." She has no other major film credits.

The middle of the story runs back and forth like a western or a serial: Paula escapes. Is captured. Transforms (footage of the first hand transformation in CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN). Stendahl leaves to bone up on brain surgery. Paula escapes. Molock looks for Paula. He drives to Stendahl's office. Meets Don. Don spots Anne's engagement pin on Molock. Molock drives home. Don follows Molock. Molock finds Stendahl. Stendahl captures Don. Don escapes. Anne escapes. Stendahl and Molock recapture Paula, Don, and Anne.

All this running around obscures the fact that this movie has nowhere to go. Having given us our monsters, the filmmakers have no idea what to do with them.

Yet, if you have never seen the first two films, JUNGLE CAPTIVE yields something unexpected. It leaves an impression of a world filled with monsters. A world whose monsters have past histories one can never know, and here we are touching only a single episode. A world that moves on, almost mindless of its monsters, who are only random pieces of its background.

That same year, HOUSE OF DRACULA was explaining away the supernatural and curing its monsters. A nation aggressively yearning to return to normalcy had no place for them. It would abandon them to settle down beneath a blanket of comfort and censorship.

As in HOUSE OF DRACULA, in the final scene, all the storylines leap together and the bodies mount: Stendahl prepares to remove the brain of fully conscious and house-dressed Anne. Molock becomes protective, advances on Stendahl with his stock "Creeper" murder walk. Stendahl shoots Molock. Molock dies. Paula transforms (previously quoted hand transformation run in reverse). Breaks straps. Kills Stendahl. Goes after Anne. Is shot by Harrigan. End frame on the lovers.

There is no moral.

The crazed finale of JUNGLE CAPTIVE. Note the "laboratory" set that could have come from any movie. Expressionism is discarded.





"They chopped off its head and buried it for 400 years; yet it lives today!"

Quite an impressive ad-line indeed for any unsuspecting Saturday matinee crowd to encounter, and if one can pause for a moment; rear back to mid-summer of 1958, envision oneself parading through an anxiously-mobbed theater lobby about to chance an impressionable glimpse of Christopher Lee in *HORROR OF DRACULA*, "a head in search of its body" may jolt your memory a bit, bringing back to mind that forgotten second feature. Soaring amidst the flying vertebrae, sinister castles atop haunted hills, blobs, and screaming skulls of 1958, *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE* is most certainly an established conversation piece, not only in search of a body, but also deserving of just criticism. This late-night television prowler is easily one of the wildest concoctions of fantasy-horror to come about during the chaotic, latter portion of the 1950s. It idles among the lesser fare of discredit and is yet another perfect example of how the limitations of a meager budget burdensomely haunted its creators. This wickedly amusing excursion merits discussion and minor dismantling since beneath all of its visual absurdity, within David Duncan's story, existed a true horror film, the epitome of '50's bizarre extravaganza. What emerges from Duncan's screenplay is a fantasy film plagued, not by the ineptitude of an inanimate staff of pallid production, but the mild inconclusiveness of its climatic structuring.

*THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE* dangles at the slender end of Universal's mildly complemented pot-boilers, cradled somewhere between *MONSTER ON THE CAMPUS* (1958) and Edward Dein's *CURSE OF THE UNDEAD* (1959) and *THE LEECH WOMAN* (1960). At the time *THE THING THAT*

*COULDN'T DIE* was made, the exalted Universal-International special effects staff found themselves at the mercy of a sudden gush of low-budget, fast-buck shockers sent via overnight express and indelibly stamped with the genius of either Roger Corman, the profitable gimmickry of William Castle, or the absurdity of Bert I. Gordon. By mid-1957, the arresting artistry of Universal's special effects cinematographer, Clifford Stine, whose presence graced the earlier, more recognized UI-fantasy films such as *IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE* (1953), *THIS ISLAND EARTH* (1956), *TARANTULA* (1955), *THE MONOLITH MONSTERS* (1957), *THE DEADLY MANTIS* (1957), and the beautifully landscaped *THE LAND UNKNOWN* (1957), stood unjustly confined and nearly unexpressed. *MONSTER ON THE CAMPUS*, *THE LEECH WOMAN*, and *CURSE OF THE UNDEAD* did not offer much for Stine's special photographic sophistication. However, *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE*, as seemingly unimportant a film among enthusiasts, did propose the potential in having Stine further define his craft. *THING*, shot under the title of *THE WATER WITCH*, is perhaps Stine's last exhibition of imaginative 1950's special effects.

Duncan's story revolves around Gideon Drew (Robin Hughes), an evil 16th sorcerer whose severed head lay buried beneath the earth somewhere in the unblemished hills of California. Condemned to an eternal damnation and axed for his wanton devilry, Drew's head and corpse are placed in separate graves, his soul lingering for centuries in divided torment. Gideon Drew will flourish and exercise his satanic powers against the world when his head and body join again, it is told during a lurid flashback sequence.

Jessica Burns (Carolyn Kearny) is gifted with the abilities of "second sight." A sociably withdrawn young woman, she lives



with her temperately greedy aunt, Flavia McIntyre (Peggy Converse), on a huge, sprawling ranch nestled in the canyons of northern California. One afternoon, with her dowsing rod extended above a dirt path, she experiences a queer sensation while approaching a tall, menacing oak tree beside the ranch-house. Unknown to her guests Gordon Hawthorne (William Reynolds), Linda Madison (Andra Martin), Hank Hutton (Jeffrey Stone), and her aunt, Jessica is aware of the site which will reveal Linda's wrist watch, lost for days and wedged within the base of the tall oak. When the article is discovered, Gordon manages to uncover an ancient talisman lying under the twisted roots and curiously examines it. When Jessica is overcome by another alien warning, she begs everyone to leave the area and return to the house just as a mysterious bolt of atmospheric force snaps a large limb and strikes Linda unconscious. Afterward, Jessica and her aunt, along with ranch staffmen Boyd Abercrombie (James Anderson) and Mike (Charles Horvath), stroll over a grassy slope as Jessica casts her dowsing stick. Flavia is certain that an underground water vein exists on the property and locating it would serve her ranch well and return a handsome sum of money. Suddenly, the forked rod starts to writhe downward and stops. Flavia is thrilled at the sight and orders Boyd and Mike to begin digging. Warily, Jessica looks on and again pleads with her aunt to have them stop the ritual, warning everyone of "something very evil" waiting below. As Gordon arrives, his suspicions of the talisman come to mind and he ponders the possibility of a buried treasure left by explorers during the 16th century. Hours later, a small, weighty chest is unearthed and carried back to the ranch, where Flavia hastily locks it inside a spare room and awaits the arrival of Gordon's geologist colleague, Julian Ash (Forrest Lewis).

While all are asleep that evening, Flavia's appointed sentinels, Boyd and Mike, shield the entrance as Jessica quivers fearfully in her sleep, the imminent horror trying feverishly to regain its dominance. Boyd's scheming ambitions of hoarding the "treasure" lead to persuading Mike, physically sound but mentally deficient, to pry open the accursed box. While Boyd wanders off to visit Jessica's cabin (Boyd being a devious and habitual midnight "peeper"), Mike lifts the lid and gazes dumbly into the face of horror: Gideon Drew. This scene is truly a memorable gem of fantasy cinema and is genuinely characteristic of Universal's distinguished methods in impacting the title fiend upon an eager audience as we see the ghostly head, in tight closeup, open its eyes and silently murmur to a dazed Horvath.

Killing Boyd, Mike grasps the head adoptively and drags the body into the forest. At the sight of Boyd's blood, Flavia summons the local police. When Linda becomes the next victim, she succeeds in having Jessica remove the talisman which results in the strengthening of Gideon's over-powering demonic malevolence. Later, Linda presents Jessica with a "gift." Within the dark, ribboned hat-box Drew schemes the reuniting of his corpse. Once enslaved, Jessica sets out to locate Gideon's remains. Gordon, Hank, Flavia, and Julian are baffled with Jessica's strange behavior, and unaware of the previous occurrences, follow her into the hills. When the coffin is found, it is brought back to the ranch and placed inside the guest room. Flavia is overwhelmed with the notion of selling the "priceless relic" to Julian as Linda discreetly instructs Jessica to fetch the "gift." Suddenly, the chest-lid creaks upward to reveal Drew's headless body which rises and wobbles drunkenly upright before the awing eyes of Gordon, Hank, Flavia, and Julian. Linda watching the horrible event with grinning delight. Calmly, Jessica walks into the room (Gideon's head in hand) and proceeds in restoring life to Drew's bewitched soul.

Drew, now of human form, stalks murderously around the room before the startled group plotting his first and ultimate offense. Wielding his dagger, he stands despotically beside Jessica and pronounces his de Sadian verdict as invaluable dialogue abounds: "At last I breathe again! Satan still lives! Four centuries have not reduced his power! So this is what mankind has become. Hogs before the butcher waiting to die!" (ying the hapless crowd, he mocks, "Which one of you will be first! After so long a fast, I thirst for human blood. You (Linda), but I think your blood is too cold, and your blood has turned to water! (Flavia) Your blood is diluted with the vile stuff you drink! (Hank, a light boozier) And you have dried up! (Julian) Ah, you. (Gordon) In his attempt to seize Gordon, Drew stumbles back into the basket upon the Godly sight of the talisman. When Gordon and Hank cautiously lift the lid, Drew's skeletal form is seen, freeing Jessica and Linda from his spell as Julian announces, "Satan has finally received him."

Based upon David Duncan's original story *The Water Witch*, the screenplay does contain a number of pills which are difficult to swallow. However, the madness of its execution is expediently expressed through Will Cowan's shrewd and tasteful direction, fashionably embodied by Stine's incisive photographic effects. Cowan's keen directorial flow successfully rouses sufficient mystery and menace to the point of the "thing's" introduction. Upon discovery of the ominous chest, a subtle implication is given as to its possible "human" contents, revealing the obvious guise of its "monster" implied title. Despite this ponderous give-away, Cowan's thoughtfully calculated pacing does manage to bolster the triteness of the film's low-voltage fiend who resembles a 400 year-old Errol Flynn.

Will Cowan's debut in the motion picture industry as producer came in 1940 at Universal Pictures with *HE'S MY GUY*, which starred Joan Davis and Dick Foran. Cowan's masterful mixture of drama and brassy big-band entertainment put him firmly at the helm of a continuing array of popular Universal two-reeler musicals and features, such as *GALS INCORPORATED*, *GET GOING!*, *SWINGTIME BLUES*, *DANCING ON THE STARS*, *ROCKIN' THE BAND*, *SWING THAT BAND*, and *SOUTH SEA RHYTHMS*, to name a few. Also during the early 1940s, Cowan lassoed endless thrills with such enjoyable feature westerns as *ARIZONA CYCLONE*, *LAW OF THE RANGE*, *MAN FROM MONTANA*, *THE RAWHIDE RANGERS*, and an extravagant "thrill-a-minute" western musical entitled *SONG OF THE PLAINS* (1943). His top-billed talents led to more generously budgeted, tuneful musicals like *ROCKABYE RHYTHM*, *HONEYMOON AHEAD*, and *ARTISTRY IN RHYTHM* which featured the Stan Kenton Orchestra. His versatility prospered with films like *JUNGLE WOMAN* (1944), *DEAD MEN'S EYES* (1944), *CALLING DR. DEATH* (1944), and *THE FROZEN GHOST* (1945). Producing and directing an abundance of television commercials during the 1950s, he briefly returned to feature films at Universal in 1958 with *THE BIG BEAT* and *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE*...his last motion picture credit. Will Cowan left Universal in 1959 and went to Warner Brothers for a short six month period and then went on to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Later, as president of Filmways of California (a subsidiary of Filmways, Inc.), he retired from the industry. By then Filmways of California had become "Will Cowan Productions."



"The casting of THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE was excellent, especially the technical aspect of it. You just couldn't do any better. Everyone on the film were all top-grade veterans. Russel Metty, Alex Golitzen, Cliff Stine, and so on were all prominent figures of technical stature," informed Cowan.

The prestigious combination of the award-winning talents contributed by Russel Metty's distinct photography and Alexander Golitzen's fresh, appropriately artistic art direction, secure the reputation of Universal's polished tradition. Russel Metty's lensing is a special and dominating mood factor throughout the film and a standout where Reynolds is hunched over the ominous chest, echoing the foreshadowing inscription: "If ye valuest thy immortal soul, open not this accursed chest. For within it lyeth the disembodied spirits of Gideon Drew, foulest and wickedest man whoever set feet upon the Earth." This is set over the tranced Jessica walking serenely out of the door into the foreboding nocturnal gloom, her divining rod outstretched as a nightmarish wind swirls her virgin-white nightgown. Cowan's strive toward manifesting a spiritually evil aura is proficiently orchestrated and capably sustains intrigue in a most freakish manner.

The story development of THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE identifies somewhat with that of Astor Picture's tinny but unusually eerie 1958 entry, GIANT FROM THE UNKNOWN. GIANT purports similar tainting of historical fact and fiction, more validly accepted in its visual content, narrating the tale of a depraved and traitorous Conquistador "Rip-Van-Winkle," whose catatonic awakening results in modern day mayhem. This sort of brew is obviously more unrestrained in THING, pivoting upon a centuries' old relic believed to contain the stolen Spaniard treasure belonging to Sir Francis Drake who sailed to the nameless shores of California during the 16th century.

Two sequences from THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE featuring Bud Westmore's synthetic head-cast of actor Robin Hughes



This is though, at times, humorously macabre, presumably unintentional.

Performances are displayed admirably. William Reynolds plays with a confident and virile straight-forwardness, nicely accented by Carolyn Kearny's naive, angelic presence. Miss Kearny's debuting role combines altered moods of tempestuousness and subtlety—a piece which she renders vivaciously. Andra Martin and Jeffrey Stone handle themselves with a certain ease of fluency. Andra is seductively transmitted, and in a few sequences, strikingly cunning as the slavish villainess. Peggy Converse, in her portrayal of Flavia, is particularly vibrant and succeeds in weaving a sense of earthy flamboyancy into her character. Via I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE, James Anderson is aptly cast as Boyd Abercrombie, one of Flavia's crafty and emotionally twisted handymen. The conviction of Anderson's performance is best observed in a scene wherein his repeated desires to connect with the innocuous Jessica are viewed in tranquil, moonlight visits to her cabin, standing in frustration behind her locked door as he peers primevally into the window to watch the young woman disrobe. Anderson's protegee, Mike, a lumbering brutish superman with the mentality of a water chestnut, is adequately played by actor-stuntman Charles Horvath. Anderson's supremacy over him creates some light comedy, smoothly overshadowed by the impending terror. A fine example of atmospheric creativity comes when Horvath is poised blankly beside the "head" which is neatly perched atop a rotted tree limb staring diabolically at Jessica in the distance. Drew's eyes turn to Horvath and telepathically promote its next command, giving way to the classically logued reply, "Yes, she finds things...even bodies." Other scenes similar to the aforementioned show Horvath traipsing around the ranch with Drew's head clutched firmly in hand by a clump of entangled hair, spying into windows in search of Miss Kearny. Shortly thereafter, Horvath is pursued by the local lawmen as we catch a foreground glimpse of him squatted behind a huge rock covering from the approaching police, cradling Drew's head in maternal defense. These actions are technically authentic in utilizing Bud Westmore's synthetic head-cast and are eerily tailored by Russel Metty's photographic definition. Gershenson's music is shrewn sporadically about from CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, THIS ISLAND EARTH, THE DEADLY MANTIS, and TARANTULA.

Special praise goes to the brief appearance of Thomas B. Henry who is seen as a strange, hooded figure during the stylishly done flashback sequence. As Jessica wanders through a gloomy, midnight forest, she suddenly lapses into a semi-trance and slips back in time to witness the beheading execution of Gideon Drew. In typically staged Universal fashion, we see a 16th century procession of grim medieval characters leading a bewildered Drew towards the chopping block, amid Gershenson's dirging drums and fog-shrouded set. An echoing hooded man orders the blindfold be removed as Henry reads the scrolled records of Drew's blasphemous crimes. "Remove the cloth and let him see a world where he shall never walk again. Fear not! His eyes cannot abide the vision of lost honor that surrounds the ancient talisman." As the cloth is taken away, Drew blurts viciously, "Cowards! Look at me!" as the others shield their eyes from his corrosive gaze. Holding the talisman boldly before Drew, Henry interjects, "Nay! Do you gaze on this? (Drew, shunning the sacred amulet) Speak not of cowards when your own heart fails at visions of the eyes you've betrayed. Ay! Grovel! And hide thine eyes, but tune your ears to this...the record of your evil deeds. Thou Gideon Drew has blasphemed thy creator! Thine voice was heard above the hurricane beseeching Satan to overt the wrath of God. Nay! Thy was robbed and murdered and by the power Satan placed within thine evil eyes, has corrupted better men to do the same!" Drew then proudly proclaims that someday "I shall rise to spread the flames of Hell around the world" as Henry further condemns, "That we shall prevent by our punishment. Let his neck be stretched!" As Drew is escorted to the chopping stump, Henry announces his final malediction: "Hear Gideon Drew, the fate before thee...Thou shall not die! Thy head which taught the evil deeds shall be severed from its immediate body. Steeped in its evil thoughts, thy head forever living, shall lie in this nameless land. While in another grave, thy headless corpse shall find eternity in which to lust...and find the time too short to give it ease! This be thy torment! And the curse shall reign, until thy head and body join again!"



Even though much of *THING* was filmed on Universal's back-lot, here is an in-door "outdoor" sequence moodily captured on film

Drew's neck is indeed "stretched" as we see a grisly shot of his head being lopped off and placed into eternal storage. The beheading sequence is surprisingly convincing, but fails to display the slightest drop of blood. This possibly being a feasibly implicit extension of Drew's "bloodless" persons.

The making of *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE* evolved during a period of dilemma for its creators. The purchasing and releasing of full-length feature films to television in the fall of 1957 caused considerable damage within the industry and to most of the major studios, as crowds at the box-office began to dwindle and decidedly preferred to stay at home and take advantage of free movie entertainment. Late 1957 was indeed a turbulent period, very much so for Universal as movie theater grosses suffered a drastic trouncing. Over 30 pictures had been completed and slated for release, against a market that had swayed favorably toward television viewing. What resulted in January of 1958 was a massive "clearing out" of contract personnel, technical staffing, and other assorted talent. Universal then prepared to produce a group of lower budgeted projects with the existing funds, scheduling these features for production in early 1958. Among this group were *MONSTER IN THE NIGHT*, *THE COELACANTH (MONSTER ON THE CAMPUS)*, *AFFAIRS OF A VAMPIRE (CURSE OF THE UNDEAD)*, *THE LEECH (THE LEECH WOMAN)*, and *THE WATER WITCH (THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE)*. Simultaneously, the end of Universal-International drew nearer to a merger with Music Corporation of America (M.C.A.), which officially came in 1959. When *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE* went into production on January 1, 1958, on a budget of \$150,000, the corridors at Universal were emptying.

William Cowan reminisced on his experiences during that period. "When I began making *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE*, some interesting situations occurred. With the times being as they were in early 1958, it was the function of all the department chiefs to clear themselves of contract individuals. This picture, as were most horror films, was not regarded highly. The chiefs of casting approached all the contracted talent on the lot and suggested they do a part in this picture. Jill St. John was one, among others. They, or their agents, would turn a picture of this budget away which resulted in a suspension, and the studio was no longer obligated to pay them. So what *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE* did was "clean out" the contract ranks. William Reynolds, Andra Martin, and Jeffrey Stone were all contracted Universal talent and accepted. Carolyn Kearny was a newcomer and was tickled pink about doing the film."

Mr. Cowan continued: "Russell Metty and Alexander Golitzen were both available to do the picture and normally would not have been assigned to a project with this low budget. Now, in England, the J. Arthur Rank Organization wanted to double-bill a low-budget horror film with a production they had at the time recently secured (*HORROR OF DRACULA*). Universal had worked very closely with them through the years, and *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE* was to be that picture. At the time *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE* was nearing completion, Universal had dismissed a large chunk of studio faculty.



Young archaeologist William Reynolds gives Carolyn Kearney the talisman which will keep evil away from her...forever

All of the writers were gone, and David Duncan remained on the staff as a sole survivor and was given very little time to complete the screenplay. I can clearly remember driving to the studio on the last day of shooting, still undecided on how to direct the finale. So actually the last few minutes of *THING* where the casket is brought back to the house and the headless body emerges was somewhat ad-libbed. On the last day of shooting, all of the department chiefs had been present to see what I had come up with for a climax! We shot *THING* in about 14 days and entirely within the Universal lot. The rolling hills which are seen in the film are actually the Universal back-lot property with the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains in the distance, looking toward Burbank. The ranch house used in the picture can be recognized as the old "Ma and Pa Kettle" facade. It had been seen in countless other Universal productions throughout the years and is still standing as part of New England Street on the Universal tour route. The finale was especially fun to do and quite memorable indeed."

Writer David Duncan spoke briefly about his work during his tenure at Universal: "I can't recall the exact year I wrote *The Water Witch* since I failed to keep copies of any of my screenplays or teleplays. I believe I wrote it sometime around 1955 or 1956. I was on a salary at Universal under producer Howard Pine who wanted me to come up with some original science fiction/fantasy stories and screenplays. I first wrote the story and screenplay for a picture which was released under the title *MONSTER ON THE CAMPUS* and then wrote *THE WATER WITCH*. As far as I recall, the screenplay to *THE WATER WITCH* did follow the original story closely. I did complete *THE WATER WITCH* myself. This I remember quite well because it was an eerie experience. There were some twenty or more writers working at Universal at the time, all of us in what was then known as The Writers' Building. One week I took Thursday and Friday off due to some sort of indisposition and then returned to work the following Monday to discover the Writers' Building totally deserted except for a few women in the secretarial room, one of whom looked at me in astonishment and said, 'What are you doing here? Don't you know that all the writers were fired last Friday!' I, of course, hadn't known and so went to Howard Pine's office to see if I had been included in the holocaust. I had not been. Universal was going through a chaotic upheaval at the time and cutting back on everything, but Howard had preserved me by saying that I needed only two more weeks to finish the screenplay to *THING*- the implication being that I'd jolly well better finish it in two weeks! So the finale did come off as quite abrupt, but time wasn't on my side. It was very strange being the only one occupying that big old building those last two weeks."

Mr. Duncan continued: "I can think of only one particular incident relating to *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE*. During the flash-back sequence, since these were Elizabethan times, I decided to put all the dialogue into iambic pentameter. The trouble with this was that the secretaries who would type up the writers' manuscripts





The climax of *THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE* featuring an ending that was somewhat ad-libbed (the movie was filmed in only 14 days!) were instructed to allow dialogue only so many words to the printed line. This was so it can be measured time-wise. But a line of five iambic feet is generally longer than the allowed number of words, so that my pentameters came back from the typists looking like anything but. This would undoubtedly mess up the rhythm for the actor. In vain I pleaded that in this one scene the rules be broken and that they type the dialogue line for line as I had written it. I failed in this endeavor through each revision, but as it turned out, the actor playing the scene was undecieved. I was very pleased when I finally saw the movie on television to hear with what gusto actor Robert B. Fuller rolled out this particular section of dialogue."

David Duncan concluded the conversation by discussing some of his other literary accomplishments: "My only original science fiction story and screenplay that never got into film was *Dark Dominion*, based on my novel of the same title in 1954. I finished the screenplay and production had started, when to the sorrow of all concerned, the producer, William Broidy, died and the project was cancelled. *Dark Dominion* was my first attempt at science fiction and I wrote it because the publishing house of Simon and Schuster was offering a \$7500 prize for the best s.f. novel by a writer who had never written science fiction material before. The book was never entered in the contest because my New York literary agent sold it as a serial to *Collier's* for a considerably larger sum than the prize would have been. Probably my only screenplay that will outlive me is the screen version of *THE TIME MACHINE*, based upon the novel by H.G. Wells and then produced by the late George Pal, a wonderful man to have worked with. The screenplay won me a George Melies Award. I was also the original screenplay writer on *FANTASTIC VOYAGE* and did not write the story. The screenplay credit went to arbitration and I ended up with only the scenario credit, the kind of thing that infuriates writers as I have undoubtedly infuriated others. For example, later in the same year that I wrote *THE WATER WITCH*, I was rehired by Universal to doctor a dismal screenplay called *THE LEECH WOMAN*, and rewrote it to the extent that I was given sole screenplay credit, no doubt to the fury of the original author whose name I do not recall. During my last five years in Hollywood I wrote almost exclusively for television, and with the exception of six or seven teleplays I did for the *MEN INTO SPACE* series, and one for the *OUTER LIMITS* series, all originals, none of my other work was in the s.f. category nor did I ever consider myself as primarily a s.f. writer."

*THING* falls into that bizarre and undulating period when fantasy and horror still retained an honest, heaping sum of quality entertainment, before surrendering to such unwatchable atrocities as *WILD WOMEN OF WONGO* (1959), *BEAST OF YUCCA FLATS* (1961), *MONSTER A-GO-GO* (1963), *THE ATOMIC BRAIN* (1963), *THE CREEPING TERROR* (1964), and *THE BEACH GIRLS & THE MONSTER* (1965- aka: *SURF TERROR*).

*THE THING THAT COULDN'T DIE* represents a mere ornament amidst the waning panorama of the late '50's monster-fantasy. However, despite its commonplace heredity, *THING* remains traditionally Universal.

[Continued from Page 3]

listen to new rock 'n' roll music, so instead they either listen to the latest trend in dreary, unimaginative radio programming (the so-called "Classic Rock" format- geared toward the "Yuppy" clientele) or they listen to esoteric (but dull) "New Age" synthesizer/fusion muzak because it caters to an elite network of fellow intelligentsis. Many of these same people, as far as film is concerned, blot out the face of now, the face of- yes -visceral violence. Instead of discriminating between good and bad splatter movies, they instead dismiss *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET* and *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART II: FREDDY'S REVENGE* in the same breath as being equally repulsive. These brain-dead, non-discriminatory snobs dismiss an entire sub-genre as trash without once attempting to pick the flowers from the weeds. Today, too many people with too many preconceptions make judgments based solely upon internal prejudices. They claim, sight-unseen, that today's horror movies, disgusting and juvenils, appeal only to perverts who secretly love to see women dismantled. Oh, if film criticism were that easy. The complexity of any film genre needs to be met objectively half-way before being attacked merely on the basis of one's sensibilities being insulted or one's morality being offended.

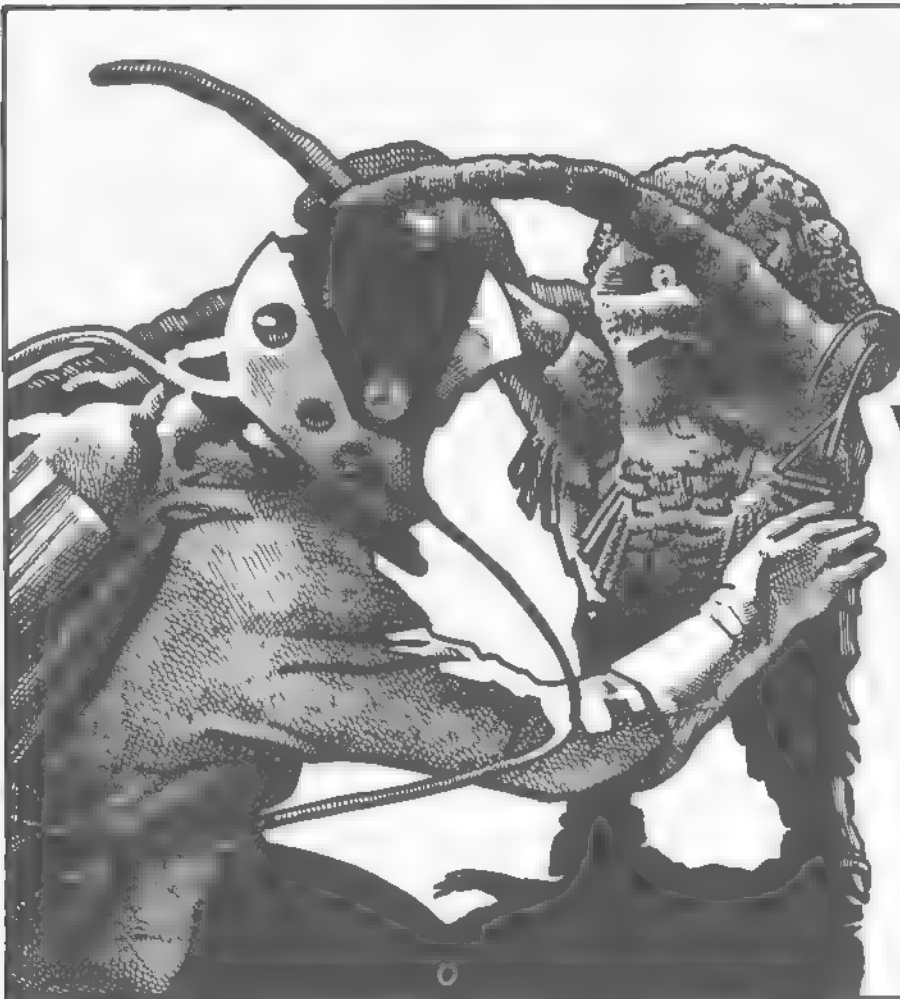
Simply stated, *MidMar* will continue to walk the fine line between covering the glories of the past, the controversy of the present, and the promise of the future. Like it or not, but the horror/fantasy movie genre is thriving. As Bob Dylan once warned my entire generation: "He who's not busy being born is busy dying."

To end on a much happier note, in two short years *MidMar* will celebrate its 25th anniversary issue. We wish to celebrate our 25 years of publication the right way- tell us how, now!! Be back next Halloween- keep those letters coming (and enjoy the extra eight pages).

*Gary J. Suehla*

Gary and Sue Suehla pose in front of Sue's back-drop (which she painted herself) which was created for our "Hawaiian" Party, held June 28, 1986, celebrating two wonderful years of marriage!





## WHAT SPAWNED "ALIEN"?

BY JOHN R. DUVOLI

It didn't all start with ALIEN. Audiences who now enjoy this film, its sequels and imitations, can think back with fondness on like-themed sci-fi which came before. These films are worth recalling because of the varying degrees of pulp imagination that went into their creation.

It is fitting that IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE be discussed first. Not only was it first chronologically (1958), but it often receives credit for being the film that—by accident or design—inspired ALIEN. Though it is seldom seen today, it still has a following and, thanks to director Edward L. Cahn, is a better movie than it should have been.

There are however flaws, particularly in the manner in which writer Jerome Bixby cultivates the romance between hero Marshall Thompson and Shawn Smith. This relationship is not only unconvincing, but unsettling. The pre-ALIEN movies were, generally, better when the primary focus was on suspense. Not only did the love interest or friction get in the way of the energy of the films in which they are used, but, more often than not, they are poorly handled. In IT! we learn early on that Ms. Smith is engaged to merry mission commander Kim Spalding. Yet, in only hours, she falls for Thompson and makes only token efforts to hide this fact from the by now terminally ill Spalding. IT! would have been better if the relationship had not been triangular, since the speed at which the "heroine" withdraws affection and support from her fiance renders her unsympathetic. Spalding eventually meets a brutal death, undeservedly so, apparently just to clear the way for the lovers.

But the key flaw of IT! is the creature itself, which proves the axiom (widely accepted in both fan and filmmaking circles) that no matter how interesting and original the monster is, what one really has is a man in a scary suit—and the audience knows it. So, the more we see of the creature, the less we believe in it. It may have looked impressive in preliminary drawings, but the execution is not totally effective. In the first place, It looks more like THE MONSTER FROM PIEDRAS BLANCAS than a Martien. Secondly, when seen in close-up for too long, the construction

flaws are readily apparent, especially when the creature is chasing astronauts down corridors. Not only do we have a man in a monster suit, but it is an ill-fitting one at that.

In much the same way that director Francis D. Lyon tried to get around the even worse constructed gill-men of DESTINATION INNER SPACE by having it jump out at us at unexpected moments, Cahn apparently knew his creature could not survive long exposure to the audience, and sought to correct this by keeping it shrouded in shadow or artificial fog created by explosives. When he does this, IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE is downright scary. It is unfortunate that Cahn could not avoid showing the monster in close-up altogether.

Finally, by today's standards, IT! is unintentionally humorous for its lack of scientific foresight, from its 1973 Mars expedition to the pencil-shaped craft itself, complete with pressurized interiors and cathedral ceilings that would put the lobby of a luxury hotel to shame. Of course, neither Bixby or Cahn had the advantage of a 1986 perspective. Why then has IT! been treated respectfully for nearly three decades? Stated simply, when it works, it works darn well.

To recap the plot briefly, the only setting (except for two brief Earth bound news conferences) is the rescue ship sent to retrieve Thompson, the only survivor of a previous expedition from the red planet, and return him to Earth for the trial of the murder of his crew. No one is believing Thompson's contention that they were picked off by a hostile life force. Thompson's rendition of what happened is among the eeriest and most suspenseful moments in the film as he describes the blinding, shifting sands and the howling creature no one can see. It may be producer Robert Kent wanted to keep the film in a claustrophobic setting. It is even more likely that budget limitations made the shooting of the scene impossible. In either event, one wishes that it were filmed. This could have been one of the outstanding scenes in pulp sci-fi movie-making. And too, remember how well the "exteriors" established the atmosphere of ALIEN.

But Cahn does manage good atmosphere and suspense when it is

discovered that Thompson's nemesis is now on board. We first see it as a clutching hand, then just a shadow on the wall, later also in shadow as it attacks its first victim. When efforts are made to kill the creature with grenades, we see it looming out of the smoke, but only in outline, roaring defiance at its tormentors.

Cahn also builds tension when the monster is not being semi seen, such as when a dying victim, all his body fluids drained by what doctor Ann Doran terms (somewhat unbelievably) as osmosis, uses his last strength to warn his would-be rescuers away. Later, when an astronaut is trapped by the creature and has only a flame torch for defense, one couldn't ask for more suspenseful filmmaking, particularly when it starts breaking down the walls.

So, despite the flaws, it is likely that this film by Cahn (who worked in the sci-fi, wild youth, and rock 'n' roll movie genres as actively and at the same time as Roger Corman, but Cahn never achieved the latter's following) is his finest hour and nine minutes. Thompson also got a chance to develop his stern but likable military man persona he perfected in FIEND WITHOUT A FACE and FIRST MAN INTO SPACE.

Of course, no satisfactory reason is ever given why scientists on a mission to a dead world would pack enough weaponry (including poison gas) to battle a small army.

A semi-variation on IT!, QUEEN OF BLOOD (1966) is among the most interesting films discussed here, because of the slap-dash circumstances under which it was filmed, the result of (uncredited) producer Roger Corman earlier buying Russian sci-fi films, then building new movies around the footage.

The few European or USSR movies (or parts thereof) that have reached our shores establish that the visual concepts and execution were superior to those of western hemisphere filmmakers of the same period. But few have been seen here, apparently because they were considered non-commercial dramatically. QUEEN OF BLOOD contains several sequences from PLANET OF STORMS and THE HEAVENS CALL, which were also featured in BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN, VOYAGE TO THE PREHISTORIC PLANET (directed by Durtis Harrington under the name "John Sebastian") and Peter Bogdanovich's VOYAGE TO THE PLANET OF PREHISTORIC WOMEN, for which the director was known as "Derek Thomas."

QUEEN OF BLOOD uses extensive new footage set on board a craft returning to Earth with its precious cargo, a female alien (Florence Marly) and futuristic vampire that eventually starts drinking the crew's blood, a further variation on IT!

The film is also distinctive because the crew is fully aware of the alien- if not the consequences in advance -and the "creature" is (mostly) human in appearance. In all other cases, the menace is distinctly alien. It is also a forerunner of Norman J. Warren's HORROR PLANET in which a murderous woman astronaut (Judy Geeson) stalks her fellow scientists and cannibalizes them. QUEEN OF BLOOD ends with eggs deposited on board the space craft while HORROR PLANET utilized baby monsters for the "kicker."

More care than usual was utilized in QUEEN OF BLOOD to integrate the Russian footage into Harrington's screenplay, even to matching spacesuits from film to film. Though the astute viewer will note that the special effects tend to be grainier than new scenes, it is doubtful that the drive-in crowd suspected that they were looking at at least two different films. The first half hour, with USSR scenes pretending to be the rescue mission, tends to be uneventful dramatically. But things pick up nicely when the crew returns to their craft and the stock footage gives way to the astronauts being stalked by Marly.

Because this space ship was not as expansive as those in other films (particularly THE GREEN SLIME and IT!), Harrington had to substitute cat and the canaries with discussion over what to do about Marly. In a switch, this alien is mostly passive, hibernating for hours at a time, when she could easily be slain. Harrington had to therefore make us believe that the being should not be destroyed, even after the rampage begins, because of her/its scientific value. Earthbound commander Basil Rathbone demands the preservation of her life. She perishes anyway, however, when scratched by heroine Judi Meredith. It seems the "queen" is a hemophilic, worshipped on her planet and sent to Earth to populate it with her eggs, which look like pulsating tomatoes.



Cowboy actor Ray (Crash) Corrigan portraying the title monster from IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE. Note the ill-fitting costume.

Harrington's tone is mostly cynical. Unlike most pre-ALIEN films in which the creature (or whatever) stows away or is brought on board by accident, Marly's presence is calculated in advance. The film is also anti-science, with the intellectuals unconcerned for human life when compared to the need to preserve the alien. They are tragically unaware of the consequences of bringing the space eggs to Earth. At the finale, Saxon hopes Rathbone knows what he's doing, but it is clear Harrington thinks he doesn't.

The star of QUEEN OF BLOOD is truly Marly, who smiles out at the explorers through tense, gleaming lips, looking at them as a food source instead of fellow travelers. Her light green skin tone is appropriately eerie and, because her skin-tight space suit matches the skin, it creates an appearance of nudity. This, and the cat-like manner in which she pursues her prey, gives her actions an underlying sexuality, particularly noticeable as she embraces Dennis Hopper or lies virtually over the unconscious body of Saxon.

Interestingly, while IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE wasn't even close regarding scientific predictions, QUEEN OF BLOOD was prophetic in its forecasts of moon landings. But its one upbeat contention, world-wide cooperation in the colonization of the planets by 1990, doesn't seem very likely.

Of the films under discussion, MUTINY IN OUTER SPACE (1965) is the only one in which the alien is basically non-intelligent; it is a fungus discovered on the Moon. It is similar in plot to THE GREEN SLIME (1968), the first Japanese-American co-production, in which jelly brought aboard a space station from an asteroid evolves into little green vegetable men. Because the MUTINY IN OUTER SPACE fungus cannot actively stalk the astronauts, director Hugo Grimaldi cannot build suspense in the usual way. The question is whether the astronauts can control the growth that is not only wrapping itself throughout the space station but around it. The script by Arthur C. Pierce (DESTINATION INNER SPACE) is purely functional, as are the effects (basic models produced and filmed in Italy) and the lunar ice caves in which the fungus is found.

Ship commander William Leslie and heroine Dolores Faith are eventually able to destroy the fungus by freezing it, since the



ship's central heating activates it. The mutiny of the title is a sub-plot concerning which of the astronaut's proposals should be followed. The film's primary, nostalgic interest today is in the casting of American-International alumni, particularly Richard Garland from ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS and THE UNDEAD, to Glenn Langan, the title nemesis of AMAZING COLOSSAL MAN and WAR OF THE COLOSSAL BEAST. Other than this, it is notable only for sharing the bill with Grimaldi and Pierce's THE HUMAN DUPLICATORS. Faint praise indeed.

THE GREEN SLIME was filmed for M-G-M as BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS and, on the surface, would not appear to be the studio's most viable money-maker. But, in a shrewd merchandising campaign, the title was changed, a theme song written by Charles Fox ["is it just something in your head, will you believe it when you're dead? ...green slime!"], a campy advertising scheme created, and miniature rubber green slime giveaways manufactured. The film thereby "aligned" on audiences more than a decade before GHOSTBUSTERS. The M-G-M art work- giant green creatures standing on a space station, tentacles wrapped around a lady astronaut in skin tight space suit -reflects what, by accident or design, is the instant nostalgia the film came to reflect.

While THE GREEN SLIME cannot be accused of being a good movie in the traditional sense of acting, tension, and effects; it is a cover from a 1940's or 1950's sci-fi magazine come to life. Scenes such as astronauts floating in space, circling station Gamma III, shooting at the monsters with ray guns, remain in the memory. THE GREEN SLIME is pulp and/or comic book fiction transposed (one suspects almost subliminally) to the screen.

The time is the future. An asteroid is on a collision course with Earth. Space hero Robert Horton is sent to take command of the space station long enough to shuttle to the asteroid and detonate it before it can smash into our planet. Small pieces of pulsating jelly are found on the rock formation, but Horton, apparently totally lacking in any scientific imagination, orders the samples be left behind. A fragment of slime finds its way, undetected, onto one of the astronaut's space suit. Once on the space station, it feeds off any and all energy sources; it grows and multiplies into a dozen or so men-sized creatures with flapping, mostly ineffective, tentacles. As the fungus of MUTINY IN OUTER SPACE is the only non-intelligence on a space station, THE GREEN SLIME represents the only non-intelligence that not only evolves into intelligence, but multiplies. They are ominous creatures- in principle if not in appearance. A drop of blood can develop into a full grown monster and will regenerate itself if injured. For practical purposes, they are indestructible.

But though the special effects and creatures may have been state of the art, as far as the Japan Toei Studio staff were concerned, they looked rather shoddy, even by pre-2001 standards. Virtually none of the models, space shuttles, Earth cities, or launching pads were adequately realistic. The only reasonable creation was the asteroid itself.

The monsters are a cross between THE CRAWLING EYE and hold-overs from the 1956 Japanese series of short films about SUPERGANT, which incidentally, were edited together and released to U.S. TV (with the hero re-dubbed "Starman") by THE GREEN SLIME producer, Walter Manley. Despite their uniqueness, including a huge, red cyclops eye, the creatures are never really all that threatening- though a scene in which a door slides open and a victim falls out (as we see a horde of monsters in the background) does provide one good jolt.

THE GREEN SLIME also falls back on the, by now, not very original sub-plots of "who shall command" and "is the officer a coward" debate, to a love triangle reminiscent of IT!. Of the principal actors, at least Richard Jaeckel brings energy and intensity to the role, while Horton who before (and after) this was remembered only for the WAGON TRAIN TV series, acts disinterested. Both are in love with space scientist Luciana Paluzzi, who is terminally miscast. Ms. Paluzzi jilted Horton to become engaged to Jaeckel (who has faced cowardice charges before, a contrivance like that of DESTINATION INNER SPACE, which will be discussed momentarily) and suddenly Horton is back in her life. Anyone who doesn't know, from the first reel, that Jaeckel must eventually go the self-sacrifice route so Horton and Ms. Paluzzi can get back together has never seen a "B" movie before.

THE GREEN SLIME has much going against it: poor special effects, unimpressive monsters, indifferent actors, and plot twists and turns that provide nothing new to the genre. What then does it have in its favor?

Perhaps more than any film discussed (with the possible exception of IT!), THE GREEN SLIME is what low-brow outer space pulp adventure is all about; though it is likely the M-G-M marketing department, not the filmmakers, were the first to fully appreciate this. It plays like an old-time serial somehow edited and projected 30 years into the future. At the same time, it must be stressed that THE GREEN SLIME can be appreciated on this level only and those who take their science fiction seriously or literally had better keep their distance. For the rest of us, THE GREEN SLIME is in a word, fun!

THE GREEN SLIME is also interesting because it embraces two eras of sci-fi film. It is a cinematic irony that M-G-M would release 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY during the same year. Manley's film, besides having its philosophical roots in the pulp era, is steeped in the "B" films of the '50s, when audiences still didn't mind if the hardware was less than convincing. 2001, for all its pretentiousness, would forever change all that. Yet, THE GREEN SLIME is forward looking too. It is obvious the producers were trying to make the special effects as authentic and impressive as possible. It is just that the goals the Toei technicians set for themselves were beyond their creative reach. But, if THE GREEN SLIME were a better film, it wouldn't be as charming.

Not all alien encounters have been in space. A submarine is also a ship in a hostile environment, and with this in mind we include ATOMIC SUBMARINE (1960) and DESTINATION INNER SPACE (1966). ATOMIC SUBMARINE differs, in other ways, from the films we've been discussing. For most of the movie's length the alien is not actively pursuing the sub crew, and there is never any "hands on" contact. At its best, ATOMIC SUBMARINE plays like one of the better episodes of THE OUTER LIMITS. At its worse, the low-budget seeps inside ATOMIC SUBMARINE and threatens it.

The setting is the near future. The submarine Tiger Shark has been sent on a mission to discover why similar craft have. The star of QUEEN OF BLOOD is truly Florence Marly, who smiles out at explorers through tense, gleaming lips; eyes them as food



been disappearing under the Arctic ice caps. Joining skipper Dick Foren is genre veteran Arthur Franz, and the on-board teneion is provided by Franz and Brett Halsey, as the "peacenik" son of the inventor whose underwater sphere is to be used during the assignment. But writer Orville H. Hampton doesn't execute this conflict in a traditional way. If for no other reason, *ATOMIC SUBMARINE* is notable for the intelligence with which the sub-plot is carried out. In the vast majority of films in which the military versus scientist (or intellectual) conflict is explored, filmmakers have come down firmly on one side or the other, with the favored side often depending on the public mood. Cold war films (such as *THE THING*, though a notable exception is *DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL*) generally had a hawkish point of view. This reversed during and following the Vietnam era, but the rise of Ronald Reagan and Sylvester Stallone has resulted in more militant films, though the sci-fi genre has, generally, tended to remain more humanistic.

Hampton elevates what is otherwise a typical "B" movie by arguing successfully for philosophical co-existence, this at a time when other writers were clearly taking sides then settling the argument by killing off whomever we are supposed to be unsympathetic toward. Here, Franz eventually assumes a less militant stance by concluding that we should be spending more time solving our society's ills than fighting invaders, and Halsey counters that if an invasion (either from across space or from across an ocean) should come, we have men like Franz to deal with it. But while the two men are waging their verbal sparring matches, Hampton does provide one great line, with Franz suggesting to Halsey that he keep out of the way and make a speech about banning flying saucers.

The saucer in this case has, in good sci-fi tradition, been sent to Earth to prepare the way for a full-scale invasion. The sub crew pursues it around the pole before ramming it, in a last ditch suicide effort. But (somewhat unbelievably) the saucer is a living organism that grows new skin and heals itself, locking the sub in a death grip in the process. Franz and company must board the craft and cut the sub free.

It is here that they encounter the monster, but because it does not stalk the crewmen, *ATOMIC SUBMARINE* lacks the energy of some other films in this sub-genre. Yet, the manner in which the alien does overcome its victims, by incinerating them with intense light and sound, is harrowing. And the film's set designers defeat the low budget by giving the very sparse sets an almost surreal look. The ahead-of-its-time electronic music score by Alexander Laszlo is also a decided plus during these scenes. At its best (and the scenes on board the alien ship are superior), *ATOMIC SUBMARINE* is a fascinating film to look at and listen to.

Actually, initial plans did not call for the monster to be shown at all, but effects supervisor Jack Rabin (working in association with Irving Block and Louis Dewitt) told producer Alex Gordon that they could deliver a monster without impacting the film's budget. Gordon recalls that Rabin told him that he had worked on *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS* but perhaps did not say that the creature itself was designed and animated by Ray Harryhausen. In any event, Gordon gave him the green light.

Gordon has never been entirely pleased with what the effects crew delivered (the special effects cost totaled \$23,000, and the entire film, shot in six days, cost \$135,000), yet this alien has since become one of fandom's favorites: an octopus-like being with a cyclops eye that speaks (via brainwaves) in cultured English and can immediately regenerate a new eye when Franz shoots the orb out. It may not be what the producer had in mind, but it is classic pulp sci-fi, rightfully deserving of a place of honor among other Gordon feature creatures including the title monsters of *VOODOO WOMAN*, *SHE CREATURE*, and the mutant of *DAY THE WORLD ENDED*.

Unfortunately, the miniature sets and subs suffer from budget limitations, and *ATOMIC SUBMARINE* plays best on TV rather than a movie screen, because the ineffectiveness does not loom as large. Scenes in which a model submarine breaks through polar ice caps are mediocre at best, and Hampton doesn't help much by failing to explain why the saucer would emit a jelly-like substance to shield it from torpedos under the water but not from ballistic missiles which zero in on it as it is escaping the Earth's gravitational pull.

But at least Gordon (here making his first film after leaving American-International, where he was a prolific charter producer) got to work once again with screen veterans whom he hired out of respect rather than just angling for recognizable names at low cost, as other producers did. Here, he talked Tom Conway out of an announced retirement and signed former western heroes, including former singing cowboy Foren and Bob Steele. Gordon always felt most comfortable working within the western genre both as film producer and historian, and he is now a business associate of Gene Autry. His last two films as producer, *BOUNTY KILLER* and *REQUIEM FOR A GUNFIGHTER* (1965), were tributes to the "B" western and were filled with its former stars.

*ATOMIC SUBMARINE* is also distinctive in its casting in that it is the only film under discussion without a romantic triangle or interest. There is no lady scientist on board the *Tiger Shark*, and only a token appearance by Joi Lansing (paid \$250 for one day's work) who partakes in a brief, interrupted rendezvous with Franz, strictly for marquee value.

It is difficult to decide if *DESTINATION INNER SPACE* is a remake of *IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE* or *ATOMIC SUBMARINE*, since it borrows from both. The concept of friction over an earlier criminal or cowardly act is from *IT!*, the underwater setting is from *ATOMIC SUBMARINE*, and the alien menace is from both.

But the creature, purely amphibian, is less effective than *IT!* and is more apt to produce giggles than gasps. Apparently director Lyon, like Cahn, realized he had to jolt his audience to minimize the flaws in the monster's construction (played by

Top: A human being becomes the victim of an ever-spreading fungus discovered on the moon from *MUTINY IN OUTER SPACE*; Bottom: The alien attack of the little green vegetable men of *THE GREEN SLIME*.





Two photos of the flying saucer, from *ATOMIC SUBMARINE*, which has been sent to Earth to prepare the way for a full-scale invasion. The sub is a living organism that grows new skin and heals itself!

Ron Burke). This results in several good moments: the appearance of the creature at a porthole; its jumping through an underwater hatch or lunging at characters from just beyond the camera's range. Though "the thing" is not convincing, the more we see of it (and we see it plenty), the more we consign ourselves, sit back, and accept it on its own terms.

Screenwriter Pierce expands *ATOMIC SUBMARINE*'s philosophical arguments between the heroes into a direct confrontation. The tension between Scott Brady and Mike Road is because Road will not admit his responsibility in the death of a former crew. His eventual confession sets off the film's most inane passage, emoted by starlet Wende Wagner, who declares, "Until a minute ago, I couldn't find much in you I really liked, and now I think I could fall in love with you." We are left to wonder if she immediately would have gone into orgasm if this admission had involved the slaughter of thousands.

*DESTINATION INNER SPACE* doesn't come near recapturing the tension of *IT!*, somewhat because the actors are not as confined, but primarily because there is no real suspense. This despite other similarities to *IT!*, notably the manner in which attempts are made to destroy the creature. While Bixby used hand grenades, Pierce envisions rigging spears to explode into the creature when the wiring is tripped. The plays in both films failed. The saucer and monster are finally destroyed by dynamite, along with Road who, in the tradition of "B" movie cowards, must redeem himself by sacrifice. This recalls the missiles fired onto the escaping alien craft from *ATOMIC SUBMARINE*.



Veteran male stars, Scott Brady (left) and Gary Merrill (right), try to save humanity from the terror of *DESTINATION INNER SPACE*.

But *DESTINATION INNER SPACE* also has some gaping holes in logic, which, along with the construction of the monster, do more than their share of damage. We are expected to believe that a ceramic egg, brought into a laboratory, could produce a full grown- and then some -monster when left alone for less than a minute. Even the growth in *ALIEN*, following the famous stomach bursting scene, took some time. Yet, despite the flaws, *DESTINATION INNER SPACE* does have energy if not style, and the intellectualizations over whether to preserve or destroy the creature and various romantic probabilities don't get in the way.

Finally, like *ATOMIC SUBMARINE*, *DESTINATION INNER SPACE* is interesting for its casting of veteran performers, from Brady and Gary Merrill to Sheree North and John (THE UNDYING MONSTER) Howard.

In *PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES*, the final film under discussion, the alien presence is disembodied spirit rather than matter. The film is also the most ruthless of those under discussion since the force overcomes our astronaut heroes; thereby recalling the post-*ALIEN*, *HORROR PLANET*.

*PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES* was directed by Mario Bava, known for films in which an exotic visual style usually overcomes a lack of narrative clarity. As *BLACK SUNDAY* was Bava's flagship horror film, *PLANET* is both his best sci-fi film and a superior example of European pulp cinema.

The sci-fi world of Bava is little different from that of his horror films. The *PLANET* theme also mirrors the supernatural genre, in this case demonic possession and the undead. Scenes in which "dead" astronauts return to life to stalk their former companions are really *BLACK SUNDAY* all over again with the planet *Aura* substituting for a remote castle where family turns against family, once they are among the undead.

The worlds envisioned by Bava are among the bleakest in sci fi films. Our first view of space from the starship *Argus* is one of intense desolation and flashing meteors. It is both lonely and menacing. The planet's surface is even more striking, with its bizarre rock formations and thick mist. The hatch leading to and from the ship fits right in. It is like nothing NASA would have designed, but rather resembles a giant ear lobe. It is clear, from the start, that we are in the hands of a master cinema stylist and the visual treats remain in the memory even if the story and dubbing is never quite up to the challenge.

The opening scenes recall *ALIEN*. A spaceship (perhaps the most expensive in any of the pre-*ALIEN* films) is lured to *Aura* by signals perceived by mission commander Barry Sullivan. The craft is pulled to the planet by a sudden surge in gravity; moments later the crewmen begin attacking each other. It is clear, in retrospect, that the life force infiltrates the wills of the astronauts who pass or fail the test (depending on your point of view).

Once the *Argus* lands, the astronauts find members of a previous expedition dead, by self-directed violence. The bodies are buried but we later see the grave slabs pulled aside and the dead men





#### The ear-lobe landscape of Mario Bava's PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES

emerging, still, wrapped in the transparent body bags they were buried in. This scene is significant, for Bava enthusiasts, because it is not only a variation on BLACK SUNDAY but for the first time establishes that this is a horror film set in space. The barren landscapes, rock formations, and swirling mist is just an isolated graveyard with tombstones from under which the dead still rise. The hardware may be formula sci-fi, but the story is formula horror. This is particularly evident when, in a variation on vampire films, the astronauts open a tomb to see if a deceased crewman is still inside. One scene, in which Sullivan pulls away the garments of a "revived" astronaut to reveal a rotting corpse beneath matches a climatic scene between Barbara Steele and John Richardson in BLACK SUNDAY.

There are still standard sci-fi trappings however. The revelation that the life forms (seen fleetingly as glowing fast moving lights) are pure energy that must inhabit the dead or living bodies of astronauts because their world is dying is typical of the genre. The forces cannot build a spaceship, however, because they lack solid form. So they lured the Argus with transmitted energy, in the form of signals.

Unfortunately, PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES falls apart badly at the finale. The beings can inhabit human bodies if the mind allows them in. This is exactly what happens to Sullivan and Norma Bengell, but for no discernible reason. The gimmick is arbitrary, makes no sense dramatically, and obviously had to be manufactured to allow the pair to descend on what grainy black and white stock footage indicates - is mid-20th-century Earth.

We have been watching an adventure in the proverbial galaxy far, far away, but the "and then they came to Earth" surprise is really a cop-out for not being able to do anything more imaginative. But it could have been first-rate, if Bava had them colonize prehistoric Earth, becoming the first Adam and Eve. But even with the let-down of the final reel, PLANET is among the best sci-fi programmers of the 1960s.

The origins of this film present a curious puzzle. European source-books credit the screenplay to a host of writers including Bava, Callisto Cosulich, Antonio Roman, Alberto Bevilacqua, and Raphael J. Salvia. The "Americanized" version gives full script credit to Ib Melchior (who authored many American-International sci-fi programmers) and Louis M. Heyward, the head of overseas production during the final years of the AIP era. It may be assumed (and this is only surmise) that the contribution of Melchior and Heyward amounted to little more than re-adapting the script for an American dub, despite the fact that the U.S. credits also go to the length of listing the film's source material as the short story, "One Night of 21 Hours," by Renato Pestrinero, printed in *Interplanet Magazine* #3, probably a European pulp magazine.

Finally, of the films we have probed, PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES has lost the most impact in its journey from theater to television. The striking sets and sound effects cannot be fully appreciated in a living room situation. So you may want to sit close to the TV and turn up the sound.

[Continued from Page 45]

The following books are available directly from the publisher, McFarland and Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640. Please include \$1.50 postage for the first book and include 75¢ for each additional book ordered. Phone: 919-246-4460.

KEEP WATCHING THE SKIES! VOLUME II [1958-1962] by Bill Warren, digest-size, cloth, 839 pages, \$39.95 (or buy Vol. I and II together for \$65.00).

Containing almost twice as many pages as volume I (for the same price), *Keep Watching the Skies! Vol. II* is the absolute must-buy this issue. Continuing where volume I leaves off, Bill Warren does admit that the years 1958-1962 mark the decline of the s.f. film genre, and his appreciation of schlock s.f. cinema is thus affected by this pronouncement. However, inbetween exciting analyses and in-depth synopses, Warren includes biographies of both stars, directors, writers, etc. involved with the genre from years 1958 onward. Of course, the expected filmography and definitive credits section is also included. Volume II more than continues the promise made by volume I.

PRODUCERS RELEASING CORPORATION: A COMPREHENSIVE FILMOGRAPHY AND HISTORY by Wheeler Dixon, digest-size, cloth, 166 pages, \$19.95.

PRC, the studio whose initials became known as "Poverty Row," made more than its fair share of horror schlock during the 1940s, many starring Bela Lugosi. Unfortunately, this interesting volume only includes a detailed chapter on PRC westerns. No single genre is highlighted other than westerns; instead, the history of the studio is documented- including a description of the economic and political factors that created the need for the "B" picture. Besides featuring a complete filmography, biographies of key PRC personnel, etc., this book includes a wonderful interview with director Edgar Ulmer. Off-beat as well as being informative, *Producers Releasing Corporation* reminds many of us what has been long forgotten.

TRICK CINEMATOGRAPHY: THE OSCAR SPECIAL-EFFECTS MOVIES by R.M. Hayes, digest-size, cloth, 370 pages, \$25.95.

Strictly for collectors of complete cast and credit lists only, *Trick Cinematography* is the reference book this issue. Included are complete production and cast credits to all Academy Award-nominated special-effects movies from 1929 through 1984. Occasionally, Hayes will include interesting notes documenting all the various versions- including stereo, mono, 35mm, 70mm, Scope/Flat -which were released for a specific movie through the years (including GONE WITH THE WIND, CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, etc.). An exhaustive reference work that must be approached for being merely that.

MOVIE COMEDIANS: THE COMPLETE GUIDE by James S. Neibaur, digest-size, cloth, 247 pages, \$25.95.

THE COLUMBIA COMEDY SHORTS by Ted Okuda and Edward Wetz, digest-size, cloth, 262 pages, \$29.95.

TONY, GRAMMY, EMMY, COUNTRY: A BROADWAY, TELEVISION, AND RECORDS AWARDS REFERENCE compiled by Don Franks, digest-size, cloth, 202 pages, \$25.95.

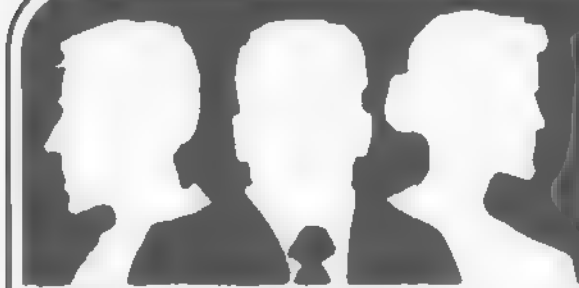
WRITE FOR MID MARI Please send us any written article for consideration no later than March 1, 1987. We welcome all contributions! Artists - send us your samples by early 1987! Write the Editor!

## CINEMACABRE

Here's your chance to get valuable back issues of CINEMACABRE the magazine devoted to films of the bizarre. Each issue contains 64 glossy pages, color covers, interviews, film & book reviews, and dozens of photos. ORDER NOW! All orders shipped promptly!

CINEMACABRE #1 - Features Bram Stoker's Dracula, The Time Machine, much more! \$10.00 each  
CINEMACABRE #2 - Jeff Morrow interview, Alien, Dawn Of The Dead, much more! \$8.00 each  
CINEMACABRE #3 - Star Trek, John Carpenter, Bruce Davison interview, much more! \$5.00 each  
CINEMACABRE #4 - 13 D horror films, interviews with John Agar & Nicholas Meyer, more! \$4.00 each  
CINEMACABRE #5 - Brian DePalma, E.T., James Mason interview, much more! \$4.00 each  
CINEMACABRE #6 - The Shining, Henry Brandon interview, much more! \$4.00 each

Add your total order and send payment with your name and address to:  
CINEMACABRE P.O. BOX 10005, BALTIMORE, MD 21204



## FORGOTTEN FACES OF FANTASTIC FILMS

by Jim Coughlin

### E. E. CLIVE (1879-1940)

Although there are genre purists who feel that humor has no place in the horror film, a well written and acted bit of levity often lends a nice balance to the proceedings. James Whale, of course, loved to inject offbeat humor into his films by relying on veterans—usually British performers like Ernest Thesiger, Una O'Connor, and E.E. Clive—to bring his eccentric ideas to life. E.E. Clive was a particularly accomplished actor, in addition to being a theatrical producer and director of note, whose dour appearance and droll delivery could evoke laughter in the most serious of situations. His character in films usually possessed a misguided sense of self importance, "harrumphing" his way through social situations. Clive was equally adept playing pompous noblemen, efficient butlers, and unsightful policemen. He mainly is remembered in the realm of fantasy for his skillful portrayals in James Whale classics, *THE INVISIBLE MAN* and *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

Edward E. Clive was born in Blaenavon, Monmouthshire, Wales in 1879, the son of a Welsh clergyman. It was said that he yearned for a life on the stage after viewing "The Liars" at Town Hall at the age of 12. Clive nonetheless embarked on a career in medicine, graduating from the University of Wales and then spending four years at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London. Amidst his medical studies he began to frequent the London theaters, until he finally worked up the courage to convince the management of the Drury Lane Theatre that he was an experienced actor. He made his debut there at the age of 22 in a featured role in "The White Heather."

For the better part of the ensuing 10 years (1901-1911) Clive toured the British Isles in stock, appearing early on in an old English tradition called "the Penny Gaff." This was a type of portable theatre wherein the company would travel around the country in flat wagons, carrying actors, props, scenery, and even benches for spectators. They would present 36 different plays over a six-week period before returning to London. While on the set of *THE EARL OF CHICAGO* (1940), Clive was quoted as saying, "No Penny Gaff player ever came away from those tours lacking experience. Because of them, I can say today that I've been in a total of 1,139 plays."

Clive spent his last three years in England under the management of Charles Frohman in such plays as "Are You a Mason?" He came to the United States in 1912, making early appearances in New York in "The Sunshine Girl," "The Great Adventure," and as Marley's Ghost in "A Christmas Carol." Clive then toured America with his own vaudeville sketch, "One Good Turn Deserves Another," before settling in Boston where he would make a significant impact on the American theater over the next 14 years. Clive initially appeared with the Jewett Players before becoming the manager, director, and actor of his own company, the Copley Players. Among the popular plays by "Clivie" (as he was known to Boston cronies) at the Copley were "Ghost Train," which ran for 23 weeks, and "The Creaking Chair." Broadway producers often ventured to opening nights at the Copley Theatre, with the result that many of Clive's productions, including Sidney Howard's "They Knew What They Wanted," were brought to New York where they enjoyed successful runs. Many noted performers spent their development years at the Copley under Clive's tutelage including Leslie Howard, Margaret Sullivan,

Rosalind Russell, and Alan Mowbray. Clive considered his years in Boston as the happiest time of his career, having particularly fond memories of putting on free performances for inmates at Massachusetts State Prison. He continued to receive appreciative letters from prisoners for many years after.

When the Copley folded due to financial pressure, Clive journeyed to Los Angeles where he produced "As Husbands Go" in 1931. In New York he produced "The Whispering Gallery" and "Shanghai Marriage," before returning to the West Coast to stay. There he formed the Hollywood Playhouse, modeled on the concept of the Copley Players, and helped launch the careers of Robert Taylor and Jon Hall.

Although he had yet to make a film, Clive was well known in the Hollywood community for his acting as well as his producing of plays. As mentioned, even in dramatic parts Clive had the knack of evoking waves of laughter with his timing, diction, and nuances in particular characterizations. Clive later remarked, "The first time I ever attempted the kind of comedy I have since become identified with was as a broken-down aristocrat, who was an old fossil living in an abandoned railway carriage, in a play called 'What Might Happen.' My friends advised me to stick to this type, but I never took their suggestions seriously until I repeated it in the films *THE POOR RICH*, *PICCADILLY JIM*, and *LIBELED LADY*. Well, I have been doing them ever since and am quite contented as long as they want me."

James Whale sensed that Clive could add the touch he required in the character of P.C. Jeffers in *THE INVISIBLE MAN* (1933). Jeffers is called to the Lion's Head Inn where a mysterious stranger is causing a disturbance. Mrs. Hall (Una O'Connor) sends the policemen upstairs to confront the 'omnicidal visitor. Jeffers haughtily disregards the threats of Griffin (Claude Rains), instructing The burgomaster (E.E. Clive) appears oblivious to the insults of Minnie (Una O'Connor), the servant, from *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*.



him to come along or he'll have to be handcuffed. Griffin responds by unraveling his bandages, prompting Jeffers to respond, "Look! 'e's all eaten away!" He runs downstairs to collect his wife, concluding, "'e's invisible- that's what's the matter with 'im. If he gets the rest of them clothes off we'll never catch him in a thousand years." Jeffers leads some men back to Griffin's room to find just a shirt in mid-air. They chase Griffin around the room, with Jeffers muttering, "How can I handcuff a bloomin' shirt?" As Jeffers attempts to bar his exit, Griffin becomes grandiose then agitated, almost strangling the poor Jeffers. Later, when Jeffers calls the incident in to his superior, he is predictably accused of drinking on the job. The special effects of John P. Fulton and the acting of Claude Rains helped shape *THE INVISIBLE MAN* into the fantasy classic that H.G. Wells intended, but the deft touch of E.E. Clive clearly marks the handiwork of James Whale.

Clive, like Dwight Frye, Una O'Connor, Edward Van Sloan, and others, became a part of James Whale's "stock company," being featured in seven of the director's films, including *THE INVISIBLE MAN* and *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. Clive was seen as Chayne, the sneaky private detective, in *ONE MORE RIVER* (1934), the photographer in *REMEMBER LAST NIGHT* (1935), the Englishman in *SHOWBOAT* (1936), a general in *THE ROAD BACK* (1937), and a vendor in *THE GREAT GARRICK* (1937).

Within a short time E.E. Clive found that there was great demand for his services as a character player in films. On the set of *LONG LOST FATHER* (1934) Clive elicited the praise of star John Barrymore, whose alcohol problem often contributed to multiple retakes, for his ability to capture a scene perfectly in one attempt. Also for RKO, Clive was the chief customs inspector in *THE GAY DIVORCEE* (1934), starring Fred Astaire. He played Detective Sergeant Thacker of Scotland Yard in *CHARLIE CHAN IN LONDON* (1934), with Warner Oland as Chan. In 1935, Clive was seen as the court clerk in *CAPTAIN BLOOD*, Thomas Sapsea in *THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD*, and the Judge in Old Bailey in *A TALE OF TWO CITIES* (which Clive considered his most effective role). The same year he turned in a significant performance in the horror genre in *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1935).

As the self-important, officious burgomaster, Clive appears early on in *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* as the windmill burns, supposedly destroying the monster (Boris Karloff). Counterpointed by the cackling of Minnie (Una O'Connor), the burgomaster encourages the townspeople to go home and return to their beds. The monster, he assures them, is dead, followed by his catchline, "Monster indeed!" Continuing, "You may thank your lucky stars they sent for me to safeguard life and property." This prompts a barrage of insults from Minnie which the burgomaster is too self-preoccupied to comprehend. The burgomaster dispatches a rider to Castle Frankenstein to inform the Baron of Henry's (Colin Clive) misfortune. Later, the villagers alert the burgomaster that the monster is on the loose. He replies, "Get out the bloodhounds, raise all E.E. Clive in profile opposite the "Great Profile" himself, John Barrymore, from *LONG LOST FATHER* (RKO Radio - 1934)



the men you can, lock the women indoors, and wait for me!" They do indeed trap the monster in a forest. The burgomaster instructs them to bind the monster's feet and tie him to a pole. After the monster is brought to the dungeon and chained to a chair, the burgomaster minimizes the whole incident. "We can't take all day over this!" Clive is in the process of dispatching the villagers to their homes once again as the monster escapes and runs amuck. A scene wherein Clive is pulled out of his chair through a window and beaten in the street by the monster was part of a lengthy sequence cut from the final print. E.E. Clive's characterization of the burgomaster in *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* was quite vivid- annoying, yet humorous, but played completely straight.

Other performances by E.E. Clive in the fantasy/mystery vein included: Sgt. Wilkes in *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER* (1936), King in *TROUBLE FOR TWO* (1936), Masters in *TARZAN ESCAPES* (1936), and Thomas Ezekiel Bilge in *MAID OF SALEM* (1937) who indicates to onlookers the spot where the body had been "recovered."

Clive also was regularly seen in various detective series, particularly "Bulldog Drummond." Originally he had a funny bit as an English "bobby" in *BULLDOG DRUMMOND STRIKES BACK* (1934), starring Ronald Colman. In *BULLDOG DRUMMOND ESCAPES* (1937), Clive was Dobbs, valet to star Ray Milland. The character was renamed Fenny when John Howard took over as Drummond, but Clive remained to play the valet five more times in *BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S REVENGE* (1937), *BULLDOG DRUMMOND COMES BACK* (1937), *BULLDOG DRUMMOND IN AFRICA* (1938), *BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S PERIL* (1938), and *BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S SECRET POLICE* (1939). Clive appeared in the fine Fox operas to the Rathbone "Sherlock Holmes" series, as the caddy in *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (1939) and Inspector Bristol in *THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* (1939). He played an English crook who is a confederate of star Melvyn Douglas in *ARSENE LUPIN RETURNS* (1938). Clive served as the commandant opposite Peter Lorre in *MR. MOTO'S LAST WARNING* (1939).

Clive appeared in many major productions in roles of varying sizes, but he usually left something for the audience to remember, whatever the length of his scenes. He was Sir Humphrey Harcourt in *THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE* (1936), the magistrate in *LLOYDS OF LONDON* (1936), St. Gedeon in *CAMILLE* (1936), Barouche Drive in *ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE* (1939), and Mr. Meimith in *FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT* (1940). Among Clive's last films were *THE LITTLE PRINCESS* (1939), *RAFFLES* (1940), and *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* (1940).

On June 6, 1940, E.E. Clive suffered a heart attack and died while sitting with a cup of tea in his hand. He had been ill for some weeks with influenza. He was survived by his wife of 25 years, English actress Eleanor Ellis, and his son, David John Clive.

When discussing fantasy films, the name "Clive" usually evokes "Colin." But the less flamboyant, unrelated Clive who went by the initials "E.E." made his own mark in classics like *THE INVISIBLE MAN*, *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, and *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER* with colorful supporting characterizations. There have been many pompous, skeptical figures in horror films over the years, but few could convey as much through subtle expression and dry delivery as E.E. Clive. "Monster indeed!"

#### ARTHUR EDMUND CAREWE (1894-1937)

Many of the character actors associated with fantasy films have left a long legacy of portrayals for audiences to savor for years to come. But there also have been those who have whetted our appetite for what might have been, having made a solid contribution to one or more horror films, only to have their careers take another direction or end with an untimely death. Arthur Edmund Carewe was one such actor. A suave villain in the silent era, occasionally dabbling in fantasy as in *TRILBY* when he was the third screen Svengali, Carewe appeared on his way to a noteworthy second career in talkies as a supporting player. Strong performances in Warners' *DOCTOR X* and *THE MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM* revealed meaty potential for macabre parts, only to be cut short by personal problems, illness, and finally suicide.

Arthur Edmund Carewe (often billed without the "Edmund" or as "Carew" minus the "-e") was born in Trebizond, Armenia in 1894. He immigrated to the United States at an early age and became involved in theater while adjusting to the culture of a new land. Carewe made his silent film debut in 1919 in *THE WORLD*





The Phantom (Lon Chaney Sr.) hovers menacingly over Ledoux (Arthur Edmund Carewe), Raoul (Norman Kerry), and Christine (Mary Philbin)

AND ITS WOMEN and quickly fell into villainous roles, mainly due to his handsome yet dark and brooding features. Carewe was Stinson, a crooked cattle buyer, in the Buck Jones western *BAR NOTHIN'* (1921); Grant Lewis, who seduces model Anita Stewart, in *HER MAD BARGAIN* (1921); John Brainerd, a blackmailer and bigamist, in *HIS WIFE'S HUSBAND* (1922); "Con" Arnold, who exposes Monte Blue's criminal past, in *MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME* (1922); and Colonel Fantress, who abducts a judge's wife and kills a man on his wedding day, in *THE PRODIGAL JUDGE* (1922).

Carewe was Duke D'Alva, the leader of the "ghosts," in Paramount's *THE GHOST BREAKER* (1922), starring Wallace Reid. D'Alva actually devises the supernatural scheme in an attempt to locate treasure in a castle, while winning the hand of heroine Lila Lee. Reid exposes the phony plot and thwarts the Duke on both counts.

As Svengali in George du Maurier's *TRILBY* (1923), Carewe drew critical raves. Svengali, as in the later John Barrymore version, becomes enamored of Trilby (Andree Lafayette) and uses hypnosis to place her under his influence and steal her affections from Little Billee (Creighton Hale). A musical genius, Svengali transforms Trilby into a great concert singer until he dies from a heart attack during a performance. Trilby joins him in death just as Billee thinks he has finally recaptured his love.

*DADDY* (1923), a Jackie Coogan vehicle, offered Carewe a change of pace as Paul Savelli, whose wife takes their son and leaves him, wrongly believing him to be unfaithful. Savelli goes on to become a great violinist and is reunited with son Coogan in a melodramatic finale. Carewe, however, was still mainly cast in evil roles: Prince Ferdinand, who tries to destroy evidence of a rightful ruler and take over the kingdom, in *REFUGE* (1923); Ramlila, an evil Arab chief opposed by Norma Talmadge, in *THE SONG OF LOVE* (1924); and Kenneth Bellwood, an unscrupulous broker who manipulates people to suit his ends, in *THE PRICE OF A PARTY* (1924).

In *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (1925), Carewe portrayed "the Persian," the only individual besides the Phantom to know of the remains of medieval dungeons and torture chambers on which the Paris Opera House is built. After the Phantom (Lon Chaney, Sr.) abducts Christine (Mary Philbin) to his lair for a second time, her lover, Comte Raoul de Chagny (Norman Kerry), seeks the aid



Arthur Edmund Carewe's last screen appearance as Professor Bowen. He is seen here at left with Warner Oland (as Chan) and players, from *CHARLIE CHAN'S SECRET* (20th Century-Fox - 1937)

of the Persian. The Persian, who is actually an agent of the French police named Ledoux, reveals that the Phantom is a madman, although a talented musician and a master of the black arts, who returned to Paris after escaping exile on Devil's Island. Raoul and Ledoux pursue Erik and Christine through the catacombs, but fall victim to the Phantom's heat trap and are nearly burned alive. Erik intervenes, allowing Christine to decide their fate. He'll release them if she chooses to marry him—otherwise they'll die and explosives will spell destruction for many. Although Christine agrees to marry the Phantom, he reneges on his word and attempts to drown Ledoux and Raoul. After Erik changes heart and lets the men live, he is chased to a watery death by a Parisian mob. *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* is considered by some to be Chaney's greatest role. He totally dominates the screen, but Carewe still was noticeable. His knowledgeable Persian, solicited by the hero to oppose the monster, predates later horror film characters like Professor Van Helsing.

As Maurice Sequeneau in *VOLCANO* (1926), Carewe tries to keep brother Ricardo Cortez from marrying Bebe Daniels, whom he believes to be a mulatto. In *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* (1926), Carewe was afforded the sympathetic role of George Harris, a mulatto slave himself. George's plans to marry Eliza are thwarted but he escapes from slavery, works as a stoker, and is part of a grand reunion at the conclusion. Carewe played Harry Blythe, one of the conniving, money-hungry relatives in Paul Leni's atmospheric *THE CAT AND THE CANARY* (1927).

After a hiatus from motion pictures, Carewe enjoyed a brief stint as a contract player for Warners. He was used to advantage as Dr. Friedland, who hypnotizes amnesia victim/star Frank Fay producing amusing and complicated results, in *THE MATRIMONIAL BED* (1930). Carewe was a phony Count in *THE LIFE OF THE PARTY* (1930), and also was seen in *SWEET KITTY BELLAIRS* (1930) and *GOD'S GIFT TO WOMEN* (1931). *CAPTAIN APPLEJACK* (1931) had Carewe on hand as part of a gang of crooks who are stymied in their attempt to locate and steal hidden treasure by timid star John Halliday.

*DOCTOR X* (1932), filmed in an early Technicolor process, starred Lionel Atwill as Dr. Xavier, with Fay Wray cast in her first horror role. Sporting a black patch over one eye, Carewe was Dr. Rowitz, one of a group of scientists at Xavier's research institute who all have bizarre backgrounds. When a rash of cannibalistic murders appears to implicate his staff, Dr. Xavier has three scientists, including Rowitz, locked to a special apparatus, while a murder is experimentally recreated. The lights go out and when power is restored Rowitz is found dead. Preston Foster is later revealed to be the murderer, making use of "synthetic flesh." The *New York Times* commented, "Arthur Edmund Carewe, who years ago gave a striking performance as Svengali in a silent film of *TRILBY*, is in his element as one of the scientists."

*THE MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM* (1933), again starring Lionel Atwill and Fay Wray, offered Carewe an even better role as Sparrow,



A youthful Arthur Edmund Carewe from *VOLCANO* (Paramount - 1926)

a cocaine fiend. Sparrow is first seen with a group of men carrying an oblong box to the residence of Worth (Edwin Maxwell). Worth initially denies Sparrow his drug payoff, threatens him for talking too much, then hits him. Noting Sparrow's desperation, Worth has an associate fetch a parcel of cocaine, but elude Sparrow's face on departure. Sparrow is later viewed working for Igor (Atwill), providing figures for Igor's wax museum. Igor refers to Sparrow as Professor Darcy, noting that, "He has been my hands for years" since the horrible fire rendered Igor's once talented hands useless for sculpting. Igor keeps Sparrow supplied with cocaine for various services, including the appraisal of the whereabouts of Worth, who is responsible for the fire that destroyed Igor's London waxworks. After another confrontation with Worth, Sparrow is spotted by the police who have been tipped that he is involved in the recent series of murders. Sparrow is roughed up and brought to the station where the captain (Dewitt Jennings) claims, "He's a junky. He'll talk in a little while. Just look him up." Carewe plays the deterioration of Sparrow very well, first denying all charges, then weakening, giving some information and begging for drugs. The withdrawal is too much for Sparrow and he breaks, revealing that people were murdered because of their resemblance to historical figures. Sparrow tells the police that Judge Ramsey, among other victims, can be found in Igor's Wax Museum embalmed in wax. "He's a statue of Voltaire, with all the other corpses! The whole place is a morgue- do you hear? A morgue," Sparrow laughs in a highly agitated state. The New York Times wrote, "Arthur Edmund Carewe, who appears as the Sparrow, Igor's emissary, does his bit to make the flesh creep." Carewe really did turn in a well-developed characterization of Sparrow, seeming to point the way to future fantasy roles, which unfortunately never materialized.

In fact, Arthur Edmund Carewe would only appear in two more films, including *THUNDER IN THE NIGHT* (1935), starring Edmund Lowe. Carewe's last role was that of Dr. Bowman, one of the usual bevy of suspects, in *CHARLIE CHAN'S SECRET* (1936), starring Warner Oland. The plot involved the search for a missing heir at the Lowell family estate, a murder during a seance, and the familiar Chan formula.

Carewe's later years had been marked by a series of setbacks, both career-wise and in his personal life. The culmination of these misfortunes occurred shortly after filming was completed on *CHARLIE CHAN'S SECRET* when Carewe suffered a paralytic stroke. Frustrated by past failures, limited in the present by the effects of the stroke, and pessimistic about the future, Arthur Edmund Carewe chose to end his life with a self-inflicted gunshot wound on April 23, 1937.

Far from a famous actor yet a very capable one, Arthur Edmund Carewe unfortunately only revealed the tip of the iceberg of his potential for fantasy portrayals in *TRILBY*, *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*, *THE CAT AND THE CANARY*, *DOCTOR X*, and *MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM*.

[Continued from page 44]

#### POLTERGEIST II: THE OTHER SIDE: \* \*

With the creative participation of artist H.R. Giger and the return of the original cast, the viewer expected at least an adequate follow-up to Tobe Hooper/Steven Spielberg's original chiller. But unfortunately, *POLTERGEIST II* evaporates and quickly turns ghostly pale when compared to the original.

Giger's participation appears to have been Federally Expressed lip-service, and the visual look of the film, with its ethereal world of ghosts and ghoules, seems uninspired. Though Giger's original sketches of the monsters appear to have been imaginative in the best H.P. Lovecraft tradition, their final realization on screen never once creates the internal sense of dread that is needed to chill the blood. Frequently when the visual effects are inspired (Craig T. Nelson swallowing the worm in the bottom of a bottle of tequila that grows into monstrous dimensions after being vomited forth by the unfortunate actor), what results is the viewer never once accepts the effects as being real (instead, the viewer is singularly aware he is watching a marvelous visual effect as an end in itself).

The grand finale, whereby the entire family is transported to "the other side," makes the same fatal mistake Spielberg made with his "Special Edition" of *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS*. While our imaginations can conjure up enough menace to keep ILM busy for decades, the final all-too-brief depiction of the ghostly dimension ends the already sputtering movie on a pathetically seismic note.

#### MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE: \* \*

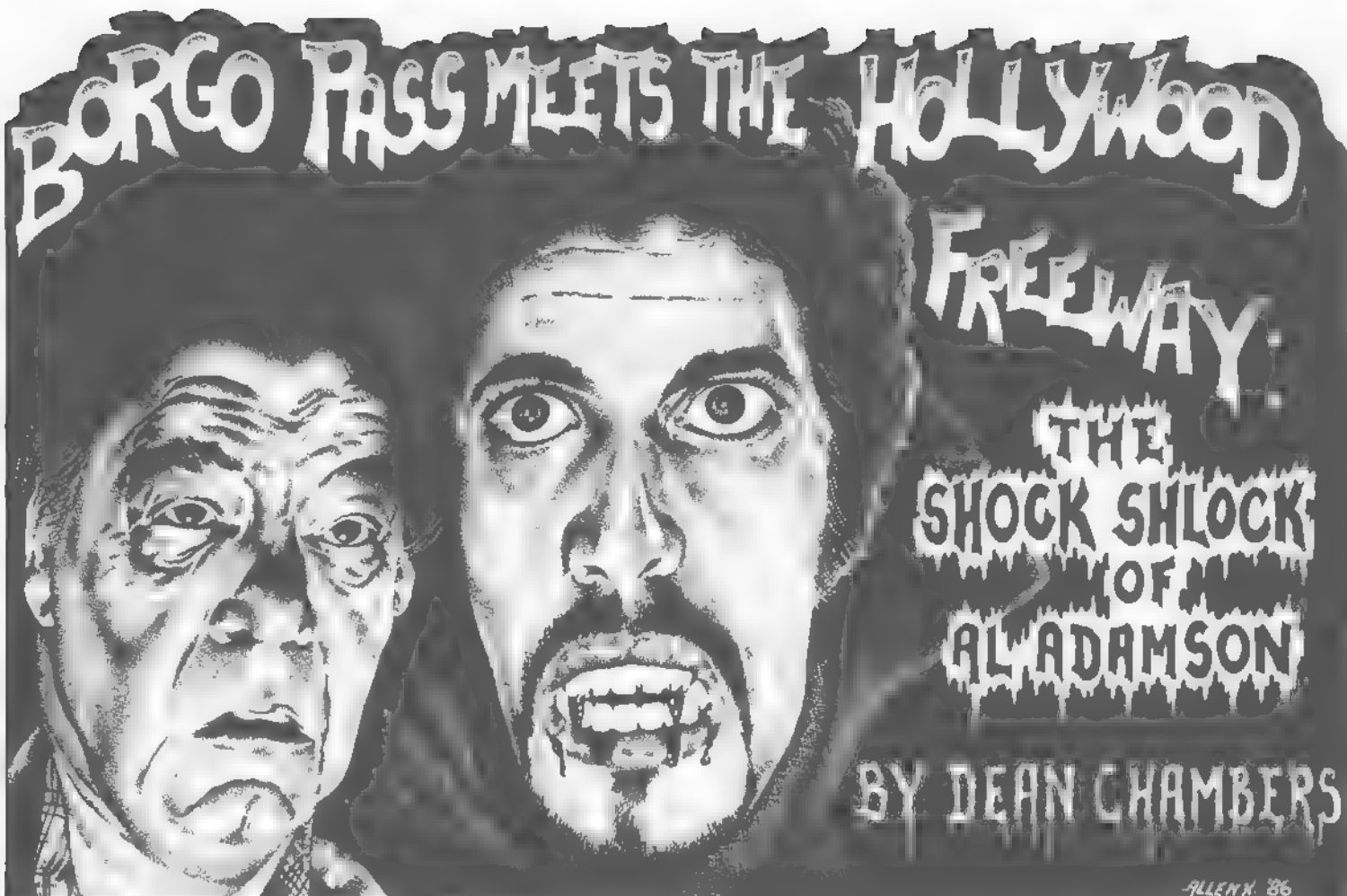
Stephen King is the first director since Alfred Hitchcock to be the focus of his movie posters, with the studio selling his name rather than selling the story or the starring performances. King's directorial debut is respectable, yet *MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE* puts entirely too much emphasis on King's creative capacities as director. *DUEL*, or even *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, this is not. *MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE* is unexceptional in every facet: writing, acting, visual effects, directing, etc. It is nothing more than a mild, diverting little "B" picture filmed with predictable plot twists and characterizations. The story is uncommonly silly, and the southern fried stereotypical humor seems forced. Not horrible in any specific department, *MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE*, with its awkwardly incorporated heavy-metal score by AC/DC, perhaps tries too hard to be something it's not- earth-moving! With the gore toned down, this film could very well rise up to be another forgotten "movie-of-the-week" on TV- no more, no less.

#### THE HITCHER: \* \* \*

Marking the directorial debut of Robert Harmon, *THE HITCHER* is important for showing us where Harmon started, for unlike Stephen King's debut, Harmon's movie creates a distinct visual and emotional style that is individualistic, if nothing more. Robert Harmon will some day make better movies, but *THE HITCHER* shows us the embryonic stages of hopefully a future master.

Which is an optimistic way of stating the obvious: *THE HITCHER*, even when considering style, is not much. It is too one-dimensional offering a bleak vision of a godless universe inhabited by a young innocent who is consumed by a series of related cruel twists of fate simply because he's in the wrong place at the wrong time. C. Thomas Howell turns in a sensitive performance, but it's also uninvolved because the viewer never knows enough about his character to care about him. For the same reasons, Rutger Hauer is obsessively evil as the title villain, but since the movie offers absolutely no motive for why Hauer does the insidious things he does, the audience is left with the empty feeling of who cares. When Hauer deteriorates into a Jason-like fiend that refuses to die at the end, the movie succumbs to atmospheric drivel.

*THE HITCHER* appears almost like it were created by director Harmon as a film school assignment- make a movie showing the universal conflict of good versus evil and emphasize naturalistic exteriors which reflect the internal conflicts of the characters. Harmon created a noble exercise in filmmaking-by-the-dots, but he forgot the "soul" of movie-making, the internal mechanism that makes an audience care.



A player in *BIRTH OF A NATION* and *THE SQUAW MAN*, Victor Adamson became an auteur of silent and early talkie horse opera. Skilled with the bullwhip, he preferred to be known as Denver Dixon when his billing didn't read Art James or Art Mix- the latter a brash steal from Tom Mix. When Dixon quit acting, he gave the Mix name to several successors. During childhood, son Al Adamson appeared in some of his father's westerns, regarded by discriminating sagebrush cinemaphiles as Grade Z. Al went into stunt work, performing one adult role as "Rick Adams" in Dixon's unreleased (or unreleaseable) 1963 oater, *HALFWAY TO HELL*.

Al assisted Dixon in his film distribution business, where he met Sam Sherman, a Dixon fan who had written for *Famous Monsters* and created *Screen Thrills Illustrated*. Sherman loved nostalgia and horror while Adamson had more diverse tastes. At Hemisphere Pictures, Sherman encouraged the company to abandon its staple of Philippine-made war dramas in favor of horror, architecting the sanguinary slob mentality of its promotion. He felt the same recipe for raunch could be duplicated in domestic production with pinches of nostalgia added. An aspiring director, Adamson went along with Sherman hoping exploitation would be the ladder to bigger things. Their aleazoid confections molded yesteryear fear and new glue in accessible modern settings with trendy background color. Sherman called the shots, but Adamson took most of the rap since he usually received producer credit and audiences react to their work as Al Adamson movies.

Adamson lacked the finesse to overcome fatal shortcomings, yet his films reveal flickers of a fettered talent striving for upward mobility, especially in his caring direction of fragile intrapersonal relationships. Every romance was poignant or pleasant, and normal people talked like inhabitants of the real world. Technically, Adamson was hurt by budget, time, and certain effects that overkilled or underachieved their intent. Adamson wasn't really interested in horror, and Sherman made certain demands, believing that low-denominator schlock was what audiences wanted. Adamson probably thought likewise, looking for places where he could squeeze in a little quality. The best action and mood scenes

were often where he gave fullest leeway to the ingenuity of quickie-hardened maverick cinematographers Gary Grever, Vilmos Szizmond, and Laszlo Kovacs. Trusting in their ability was Adamson's pictorial asset, while his own involvement favored guidance of the actors.

Sherman was partial to veteran stars like Scott Brady, Kent Taylor, and John Carradine; while Adamson manifested casting of younger faces such as Robert Dix (son of the late Richard Dix), Joan Baez clone Vicki Volante, Richard Smedley (a former husband of Lana Wood), actor-technician Gary Kent, and the fabulous Regina Carroll- Mrs. Al Adamson. A dancer in Presley musicals, she was a nightclub performer in Las Vegas, where she hosted a TV interview show and wrote a local entertainment column. Included in the Adamson acting clan were two future directors: John "Bud" Cardos (*KINGDOM OF THE SPIDERS*, *THE DARK*, *NIGHT SHADOWS*) and Greydon Clark (*SATAN'S CHEERLEADERS*, *WITHOUT WARNING*). Like Adamson, Cardos had once been a S.A.G. moppet and a Fall Guy while stage-trained Clark has cast his spouse, Jacquelin Cole, in several of his productions.

Many Adamson films are chronologically uneven, often starting with an idea that was either expanded or modified with inserts to tap new areas of marketability. When the end (?) result was sold to TV, scene cutting and new titles compounded the confusion. Adamson-Sherman pictures copied the look of Hemisphere by recruiting Bob le Bar to animate their lurid, rough-hewn title sequences, and most had the same infantile fixation on the word "blood." The TV names were not only more tasteful, but more grammatically coherent. The mangled syntaxes of old labels like *BRAIN OF BLOOD* and *BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR* hardly constitute good English (let alone good taste).

*BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR*...that was one of Adamson's last horror films, wasn't it? Well, yes and no. His career, so to speak, "began" with it. In 1965, he made *PSYCHO A 'GO-GO*, starring Roy Morton as Joe Corey, the sadistic strong-arm man for a jewel theft ring. Following a violent heist, some stolen gems wind up in the back of an innocent man's truck, and later, a little girl's doll. At first, Joe was sidetracked in his search for them when



rock music drove him mad and he felt compelled to molest and murder go-go dancers. While chasing the child and her mother through snowy terrain, Joe is killed by the police. When Hemisphere bought PSYCHO in 1966, Adamson shot new scenes for what became FIEND WITH THE ELECTRONIC BRAIN. In its TERMINAL MAN-like premise, Joe is an early Vietnam casualty given a defective brain implant by Dr. Howard Venerd (John Carradine). Blaming Venerd for his behavior, Joe electrocutes him with his special apparatus, the head-piece actually being an old-style hardhat. Yet another story, BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR- the culmination of a movie that didn't know when to quit came six years later.

Produced in 1967 by Adamson and Rex Carlton, BLOOD OF DRACULA'S CASTLE, the first Adamson-Sherman Blood opus, poked its fingers into almost every conceivable variant of how to and how not to tell a vampire story. The bottom layer was vampiric visitation of America by a foreign strain required to socially "conform." By including other monsters, it was also a Horror Household picture. Though actually undead, the vampires relished their identities narcissistically like gay pretenders. They enjoyed longevity but lacked the force of being self-sufficient.

Rex Carlton had written a vehicle for Jayne Mansfield called FEAST OF BLOOD. Sam Sherman rewrote the script, stuffing it with perverted traditions and a few new ideas. The one palpable consistency was satire. Alias Townsend, Count Charles and Countess Elizabeth Dracula inhabited Falconroc...an undead falcon Crest for the allusion of blood to wine. Its location, the Southwest, was apt because so many unorthodox vampires favor that territory. Dracula had been there before in BILLY THE KID VS. DRACULA, the nearest film comparable to BLOOD OF DRACULA'S CASTLE because both starred John Carradine and were tongue-in-cheek. The Draculas ruled the roost, but their lackeys committed the major mayhem. Two- a creepy butler and a hunchback -were standard types. The third was an ambiguous quantity. Like the creature boarders of the HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and the HOUSE OF DRACULA, they left a trail of crimes to the doorstep of their abode, those crimes somehow relevant to the doings of their masters.

The Draculas and the butler, George, worshipped "the Great God Luna." Ecstatically devout, George was the priest of their exclusive lodge. In THE VAMPIRE'S GHOST, moonlight revived Webb Fallon after he was struck down by a silver-tipped spear. Sherman's scenario enlarged lunar health benefits by granting the moon the power to affect immortality in conjunction with the drinking of human blood. The original blood supplier was Johnny Densmore, a full moon-atic who prided himself on possessing controlled impulses otherwise. His "self-control" did not exclude reasoned violence. The hunchback, Mango, was a beefier, Anglicized cousin of Koukol, the one in THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS.

The moon figures in the lyrics of a car radio tune sung by Gil Bernal, the vocalist for two of the best films of '67, IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT and IN COLD BLOOD. The driver, Ann (Vicki Volante), runs out of gas. Hooked to the music, she traipses off in a silly euphoria, fainting at the sight of Mango (Ray Young). At the California Marineland, commercial photographer Glen Cannon (Gene D'Shane) is shooting a fashion layout modeled by his fiancée, Liz Arden (Barbara Bishop). A telegram informs Glen he has inherited Falconroc and its sixty-year tenants.

Eviction worries the Draculas (Paule Raymond and Alex D'Arcy), who have arranged for institutionalized Johnny's escape. Their latest beverage dispenser, Ann, awakens in the wine cellar with three other chained women, where George (John Carradine) extracts some of her blood with a syringe. Served in cocktail glasses filled with tomato juice, here is Double-O-Positive -a rare vintage. A bribed guard (John Cardos) springs Johnny (Robert Dix). Murderously overobliging, Johnny inflicts an alibi slugging, becoming a mungy werewolf in post-production TV footage. Here it is edited into his prior violence with a ripply moon shot. Initially, the first full moon is not due yet. The werewolf music is also different, utilizing a synthesizer. Back at Falconroc, the Draculas meet Ann while deviant Mango, who tends to the empties, takes tapped out Girl Number Four. After savoring their Bloody Anne, the Draculas retire to their coffins, wishing each other sweet dreams.

Fugitive humanoid Johnny pads the kill rate as he slays a bikinied girl bather, kidnaps a hunter, steals his car, shoots a hitchhiker for his food and clothing, and sends the hunter and his expediently



Top: J. Carroll Naish lies beheaded; Bottom: Cancer-riddled Lon Chaney hugs a rodent to remind the audience that he once was Lennie. Both actors were in ill health when doing DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN.

dated saden over a precipice. At Falconroc, Johnny meets George and they shoot pool. Thought one of the "family," Johnny has never been told why blood is important. Glen and Liz arrive to inspect their new property -surprised by the youth of their hosts.

Liz' suspicions are aroused at dinner when the Draculas exclude her and Glen. Late at night, she hears screams from the cellar. For TV, werewolf Johnny chases and slays a girl who inexplicably pried loose her chains. Investigating, Glen and Liz encounter Mango. George asserts they heard a "bird." Johnny disables Glen's car so he and Liz will be kept for the night of a new sacrifice.

When Glen and Liz explore the cellar, they discover the women and the Draculas' caskets. Johnny, George, and Mango chain them up. On-cue rats frighten Liz and Ann who, at one point in this protracted cellar scene, stand on a film rental box. When a tarantula crawls up her dress, Johnny chivalrously kills it. Ann resembles a girlfriend he killed one moonlit night. Johnny frees her, offering her escape -but this will cost him immortality. Glen and Liz are spared to provide "his" and "her" hemoglobin and Glen will sign falconroc over to the Draculas. They are forced to accompany the others in a robed procession to a seaside cliff where Ann is burned at the stake.

As Glen and Liz are made to partake in a group toast to Luna (real wine), Glen throws his drink into Johnny's face, shooting him with his gun. He and Liz tie the Draculas to chairs. George menaces Glen with a whip and a mace, but falls down the cellar steps, breaking his neck. Pleading for their unlives, the Draculas begin to rot as the sun rises. Graphic disintegration is only worded by awestruck Glen and Liz -staring at nothing. The timely subjective demise of the 1931 Dracula at least had the defense of censorship. In an asinine mercy twist, the Draculas rise

from their empty clothes and fly away in an antecedent to the happy ending of LOVE AT FIRST BITE.

Mango remains a bone of contention. Bullet-proof, he subdues Glen, hoping to give Ann's ashes company by burning Liz at the stake. Glen buries an axe into Mango's back, torching him with gasoline. Like a burning scarecrow doing an exaggerated Frankenstein stagger, Mango drops to the beach below. When the cast takes its curtain call, Barbara Bishop symbolizes the wedding plans of Glen and Liz by posing resplendently in a mad wedding gown.

With decent color and some smart locations, BLOOD OF DRACULA'S CASTLE had a leg up on other Adamson films for production quality. Too often, though, Adamson is enamored by the face attractions of a particular setting. The California Marineland sequence not only goes for "cute" with various sea animals hogging Glen's lense, but the imitation Tijuana Brass muzek scores it like a TV ad spot. At the impressive Mohave Desert Castle Ranch, Adamson had a background that provided visual relief from some of the Vied humor (not all gore gags- Johnny tells an elephant joke). The vast stony ornateness of the living room was a redemptive value that presented itself only incidentally. It would seem, in DRACULA'S CASTLE, that if something worked it was not where it was supposed to. Glen had the funniest lines while psycho-Johnny was more frightening than his after-thought werewolf self.

Suppose Jayne Mansfield hadn't died in a gruesome auto accident, or BLOOD OF DRACULA'S CASTLE had been made with her sooner? What kind of Countess Dracula might have found her way into THE WILD, WILD WORLD OF JAYNE MANSFIELD? Such hypothetical footage would have been a perfect complement to her one actualized fantasy film, THE LOVES OF HERCULES. As Mansfield's replacement, Paula Raymond came on as Nanette Fabray impersonating Yvonne De Carlo as a more decadent version of Lily Munster- albeit a black gilded lily. John Carradine had been slated to play Dracula, but since this no-mcCount was a wimpire, Alex D'Arcy did the part more justice with his sticky Continental suaveness. Hence a Carradine Dracula film in which he was not Dracula but a stronger subordinate character. Sometimes effective as Johnny, Robert Dix had scary eyes and a twisted smile that heightened their gleam.

When a financier of the film and the processing lab foreclosed, no one received any money. This was one reason why a planned sequel, DRACULA'S COFFIN, was not made. The financiers sold DRACULA'S CASTLE to Crown-International, which paired it with another Rex Carlton film, NIGHTMARE IN WAX, in 1969. "BLOOD OF" was lopped off for TV.

That year, Sherman, the president, and Adamson, the vice president, founded Independent-International. "The Company that helps the exhibitor to make money." Its first picture, SATAN'S SADISTS, was an almost surrealistically vile biker flick and the only "cult" Adamson film. I.I. proposed a horror movie with satanic overtones called SATAN'S BLOODY FREAKS. Also made in 1969, it developed into BLOOD OF FRANKENSTEIN, and was finally seen in 1971 as DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN.

Shot at Venice Beach, BLOOD SEEKERS (another early title) concerned Dr. Durea and his mute "zombie" assistant Groton. J. Carroll Naish was not the outset candidate for the Durea role, but it was modeled on his nefarious Nippon Dr. Deka in the 1943 BATMAN serial. Deka owned a war atrocities arcade. Crippled Durea ran a Creature Emporium where he sent axe-killer Groton out to decapitate girls so their adrenally-enriched blood could create a rejuvenatory "blood" serum. Their heads sewn back on, the nude somnolent girls stood in vertical glass coffins like the women of VOODOO MAN with frames that judiciously covered their private parts. Offered the Durea role, Paul Lukas found it too grisly for his palate. Broderick Crawford was to play Sgt. Martin, a Missing Persons' detective, until another job kept him away and Jim Davis took over.

The agent for both Naish and Chaney sold Sherman damaged goods. Naish was wheelchair-bound. Seen in another Adamson film A TIME TO RUN (aka THE FEMALE BUNCH), cancer-riddled Chaney was practically voiceless, his face bloated from chemotherapy. Thought lacking his earlier robustness, Naish managed to invest his part with some feeble authority. Chaney could hardly go through the motions of his worst Lennie impersonation. Aging but still feisty, Angelo Rossitto was Grzbo, the dwarf Emporium Barker. Russ Tembllyn of SATAN'S SADISTS was the main bike heavy, Rico. Because the

rough cut was so short, Sherman added Dracula and the Frankenstein monster to the script. Durea was now the last living Frankenstein.

Knowing Famous Monsters would boost anything with its jovial editor in it, Sherman cast Forrest J Ackerman as Dr. Beaumont, the scientist who had discredited Frankenstein. He conceived the name of the painstakingly anonymous Dracula actor, Zandor Vorkov. His razor-angled visage was penetratingly foreign and he spoke in a prepossessing echo-chambered voice, but resembled a court jester with the black plague in absurd blue-lit whiteface. Transported by the physique of seven-foot-four John Bloom, the face of the monster- glopped together by FM makeup discovery Tony Tierney -was like that of a compacted bulldog encased in clay.

Seasoned with Hans Salter, Joe Gershenson, and Paul Sawtell themes, William Lava's last music score is zesty but marred with corny oscillating hums. The new proper begins in Oakmoor Cemetery, where Dracula disinters the chained monster, killing a caretaker. At the Creature Emporium, foggy night customer Joanie Fontaine (Maria Leese) wanders to the beach, where she is brutally axed. Against the warning of Sgt. Martin, Joanie's older sister Judith (Regina Carroll), a Vegas show girl, decides to find her.

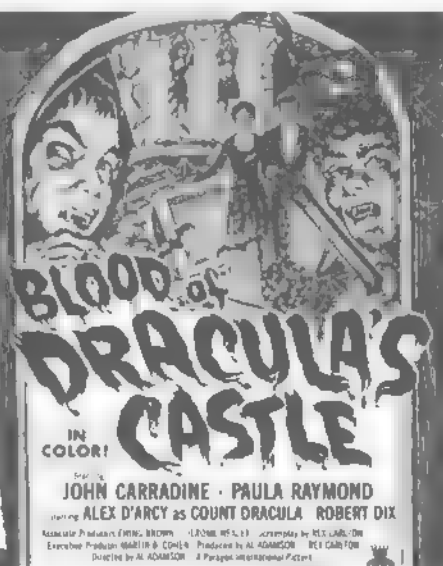
Friendly hippies Strange (Greydon Clark, and Samantha (Ann Morrell), Rico's ex-girl, visit the Emporium. Ceremoniously, Grzbo grosses them out by eating a dollar bill! The sole live "exhibit," Groton plays Wolf Man behind a Halloween mask. After closing time, Frankenstein gives agonized Groton his latest blood serum fix. In squalid, third-degree merciless closeups, Chaney appears to be winging it on his own pain. While Groton goes head-hunting, Frankenstein meets Dracula, recognizing his crest ring and the significance of a mirror without his reflection. Responsible for the fire that injured Frankenstein were Beaumont and his deceased colleagues, Steadman and Markey. Beaumont had experimented with the monster, burying it to resume his work later. Dracula wants the monster restored and the blood serum to break his a.m. curfew. This particular crest ring emits a reggedly cartoonish power ray. A young beach couple (Gary Kent and Connie Nelson) detect Groton, who snarls like a real wolf, during his latest axe attack.

In a cafe, Rico worries about nosy Judith and slips her an LSD mickey. Enticing in tights, her "trip" body writhes upsidedown in a giant spider web. Strange and Samantha help escort the acid Miss Muffet away. To revitalize the monster, Frankenstein and Dracula use some of the thirties' Universal Frankenstein lab gear -seen in a kaleidoscope of weakly-tinted colors and thickly hand-painted images -as it draws power from a passing comet. When Dracula materializes in his car, all Beaumont does is cravenly ask, "Who are you? Who are you?" Up ahead, the monster breaks his back- and almost the spine of Ackerman -when actor Bloom applied excess pressure.

Off her lysergic bender, Judith meets Mike Howard (Anthony Eisley), a writer who knew morbid Joanie. They visit Frankenstein, who feigns dim recall of her. At lovers' lane, the horny monster attacks a couple. The girl he grabs emits unnaturally shrill piping shrieks even funnier than the hokey heroine screams from

**HORROR  
BEYOND  
BELIEF...  
LIES WAITING  
FOR ALL WHO  
DARE ENTER  
THE  
VAMPIRE'S  
DUNGEON!**

COUNT DRACULA and  
HIS COFFIN-MATE  
COUNTS DRACULA  
NEED YOUNG GIRLS  
TO STAY ALIVE...  
ANOTHER 300 YEARS!



Aaron Spelling TV shows. Two cops who intervene (one John Bloom's old buddy, Albert Cole) die. Carried off, the girl simply disappears.

Rico and his pals (William Bonner and Bruce Kimble) catch Samantha taking under a pier and try to gang-bang her. Grotton scores four when he chops them up. He returns to Frankenstein's lab through a secret entrance discovered by Mike and Judith who barge into the Emporium through the front, finding Joanie and Samantha. Since they are lovers, Frankenstein expects their blood to yield reservoirs of adrenalin when affected by the trauma of seeing that special someone die. In the ensuing melee, Frankenstein accidentally rams his wheelchair against a guillotine, severing his own head. Unable to resurrect himself, his personal adrenalin rush is a waste. Grotton chases Judith to the roof as Strange arrives with Martin and several reinforcements. Martin shoots Grotton. Ready for a coffin measure, Chaney could have doubled for the underpadded dummy thrown to the pavement if he wanted to die with gressepaint on.

Who should appear but Dracula, who hypnotizes Judith, taking her to an abandoned powerhouse, where Mike blinds the monster with a flare. In his sightless fury, he attacks Dracula. Mike and Judith flee, but Dracula cinders Mike with his lethal trinket.

The last scene was filmed in New Jersey to make use of an empty church for Dracula's lair. Dracula's makeup looks even cruddier with soot black pools of eye shadow and a mouthful of baby shark teeth. He tries to vampirize Judith, but fonder of her than that teeny bopper noisebox, the monster protests. As they fight outside, Dracula's ring slips off. Some disassembly required, he kills the monster manually. Alarmed by the crack of dawn, Dracula retreats to the church. His legs let him down and he decays in full view without becoming a bat this time. Wriggling free of her bonds, Judith leaves the church.

DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN was Adameon's PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE for epochal jerry-rigging and celebrity debasement. I.I. felt that it had to carry over the ingredients from SATAN'S SADISTS to hit the same paydirt, but the Mod flavor of Venice only magnified the artistic sclerosis of palsied Naish and Chaney. The blood serum experiments had none of the showy luridness of the overdone acid trip, and the rape notion of the bikers made the attack by Grotton near-heroic. Whether the sleeping beauties would ever wake up from their limbo was an unconsidered loose end. Mike lived in one version of the film, only to die in another.

If the artifice of BLOOD SEEKERS was crumbly, most scenes of Dracula and the monster were as putrid as decomposing nitrate. In DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN, Dracula reverted to a predatory loner who could probably get away with roaming Venice in his costume since most of its inhabitants are weird, while the monster was a kindergarten dupe of the cliched universal chassis. Plot-propping parodies of their most archaic stereotypes, the monsters were played by two non-entities, one of whom was publicized as an enigma for tawdry pressbook copy. One potential absurdity was averted 1965's PSYCHO A 'GO-GO became 1966's FIEND WITH THE ELECTRONIC BRAIN which in turn became a zombie picture released in 1972, BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR (the zombie here pictured claiming a victim)



by inept preparation when Dracula was supposed to vampirize the monster (how could that be when his life force was artificially created and his flesh dead parts?) and John Bloom's makeup could not hold a pair of fangs. A film titled DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN should have them earn its name, but a simpler movie called THE BLOOD SEEKERS would have been better off without them. Forry Ackerman's showboat ride sent him up the creek and job-related injury wasn't worth the extra credit of a Technical Consultant.

When DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN aired on Philadelphia's "Saturday Night Dead," the "ghosts" of Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi came forward, urging hostess Stella not to run any more of it. J. Carroll Nash and Lon Chaney were unavailable for comment.

Before going to his last round-up in 1972, Denver Dixon played a frontier scout in FIVE BLOODY GRAVES, a 1970 Adameon western written by star Robert Dix. Riding his "pale horse," "Death," Gene Raymond provided running commentary. His tool, anti-hero gunman Ben Thompson (Dix), is one of the dead living. The doomed living include John Carradine as a hellfire preacher, John Cardos in two roles as a savage Yacqui chief and the avenging widower of a slain squaw, and Jim Davis as her killer, a gun-runner. One dirgy snatch of music became a leitmotif for crisis in the early episodes of Dallas!

Paired with FIVE BLOODY GRAVES was HORROR OF THE BLOOD MONSTERS -a Jerry Warren clone for Adameon. Instead of adding on to films he shot earlier, Adameon made the film around scenes from a Filipino obscurity done at Tamaraw Studios of Manila -perhaps even two. The alternate titles: CREATURES OF THE PREHISTORIC PLANET, HORROR CREATURES OF THE PREHISTORIC PLANET, SPACE MISSION OF THE LOST PLANET, and VAMPIRE MEN OF THE LOST PLANET simply weren't "Bloody." The Tamaraw scenes featured primitive vampiric beings who redefined vampirism as a solar scourge brought here deliberately so the alien ones could propagate. Brother Theodore summarized vampire history in the prologue and narrated. The Earth contingent -made up to watch the Filipino cast -flash stupid leers. The length of their fangs would cow a sabre-toothed tiger. I have seen only one published photo of his face, but one vampire resembles Al Adameon.

The trouble originates from the Spectrum Planet. Three astronauts led by Dr. Rynning (John Carradine) fly there in space scenes from Carradine's WIZARD OF MARS. A cavernous communications chamber with a view of the stars is property of THE TIME TRAVELERS. The only "live" personnel are Col. Manning (a noticeably paunchy Bob Dix) and Valerie (Vicki Volante). When they knock off for

**DOUBLE DOSE OF SHOCK!**  
A Blood-dripping Brain Transplant  
turns a Maniac into a Monster...

**TEEN** **BRAIN & BLOOD**

in blood-curdling color

STARRING KENT TAYLOR GRANT WILLIAMS REED HADLEY REGINA CARROL





whoopie, they connect themselves to the Electronic Sense Amplifier, a techno-aphrodisiac for purposes here, invented by California scientist Arnold Pace Rogers. Touted as new on film, it had also appeared in Dr. Frankenstein's lab. Maybe this endowed the monster with a libido. Carradine can be cranky in his worst films, and as Rynning he goes on a bitch binge, spraying the spaceship walls with vitriol.

The Spectrum world is tainted by chromatic radiations. They consist of "Spectrum X," described as a filter process that removes all color from a scene except one pure color, changing to various shades. This bogus phenomenon is only a very basic selection of cheap tints meant to mask the black and white Philippine cinematography. Monsters run hot and cold: flimsily-winged midget bat-men, snake people with rubbery serpents attached to each of their left arms, and crustacean claw creatures. The vampires are at war with a nice tribe of humans. One of their women had been a main character in the Tamaraw tale and a much-different looking Jennifer Bishop plays her surrogate, Lian Malien.

Lian is befriended by the Rynning party. A special brain communicator turns the other scenes into "visions" of the vampire plague, described by her in flashback. It will end soon with the imminent destruction of the planet. Using a natural petroleum source for fuel, the Rynning ship takes off.

On TV, the BLOOD MONSTERS narration was cut, as were all of the Earth vampire scenes (cheating us of Adamson's "cameo" -if it were him). It was more fun than shoddy "Spectrum X" because it let us use our imaginations. Illegally, Allied Artists Video sold copies of HORROR under its VAMPIRE MEN OF THE LOST PLANET name, prompting legal flak from I.I.

One Philippine film from Hemisphere was THE BLOOD DRINKERS, reissued as VAMPIRE PEOPLE. Needing a co-feature, Hemisphere

turned to Adamson and Sherman, who made BRAIN OF BLOOD in 1971. An American version of the antics on Blood Island, it was inspired by the 1970 death of Egyptian president Abdul Nasser. Sherman wondered what would have happened to him and his land had his preserved brain lived on in a new body with the face changed by plastic surgery. Amir, the dying ruler of mythical Kalid, stood in for Nasser while Hemisphere loaned the Blood Island music of Tito Arevalo.

Losing his battle with cancer, Amir (Reed Hadley) is ministered to by Dr. Bob Nigserien (Grant Williams), loyal aide Mohammed (Zendor Vorkov), and his secretive consort Tracy Wilson (Regina Carroll) who knows blacklisted American surgeon Dr. Lloyd Trenton. After clinical death, Amir's tinfoil-wrapped body is brought to Trenton (Kent Taylor) and his dwarf helper Dorro (Angelo Rosaitto) by Bob, Mohammed, and two armed guards. Trenton removes the raw, ketchupy hamburger brain of Amir via laser, perpetuating it artificially in his Blood-Cycle Refrigeration unit until the awaited body transfer. Second minion Gor (John Bloom) is a bucket-headed hulk sent to find the new one. He spots a thief sneak into the apartment of a girl who faints when she sees Gor. The terrified thief falls to his death from a fire escape.

Trenton keeps a state-of-the-art lab while his cellar is early medieval hellhole. He obtains blood the Count and Countess Townsend way with imprisoned girls. One, Katherine, is Vicki Volante, who again is someone who can be "banked on." Most of the blood is cruelly collected from another girl (Margo Hope)- sadistic Dorro's "little chickadee." Removing her, he drops his keys. Unlocking herself, Katherine gets lost in the depths of the cellar. Dissatisfied with the broken body of the thief, Trenton decides to buy time using Gor. Under anesthesia, he remembers the two yahoos who disfigured him with battery acid.

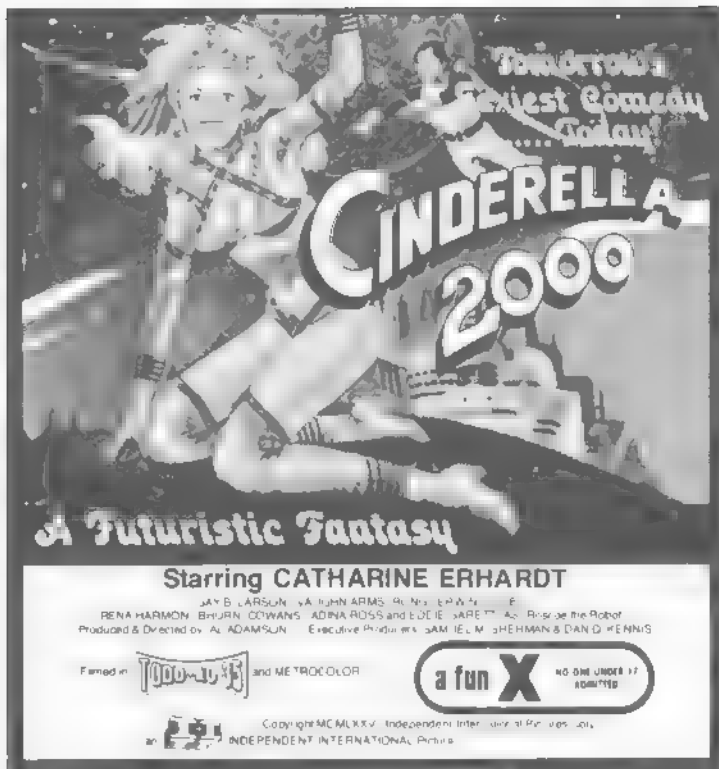
Hired by Trenton, Angel (Richard Smedley), a hit man, runs Bob, Mohammed, and the guards off a mountain road. Only Bob survives. In the cellar, Katherine finds her friend dead and sees old Amir's body, the noggin neatly sawed off. When Tracy joins Bob, they sight Angel, who fights Bob and escapes. His payment for an incomplete job is a car bomb set by Dorro.

Bob and Tracy visit Trenton, seeing the new, ugly Amir, who feels betrayed. Deceitful Tracy fuels his paranoia by claiming Bob is his political enemy. Amir attacks Trenton, slugs Bob, and escapes on foot with Tracy. Trenton had fitted Amir with a brain detector and uses a portable laser as a direction-finder. Dorro drags unconscious Bob into the cellar, where Katherine stabs him with a syringe. Bob revives. The activated mini-laser gives Amir Excedrin-sized headaches. Bob and Katherine meet a boy who saw Amir. Sending him and Katherine away, Bob confronts the others. Amir begs Bob to kill Trenton, who wants all Kalid. He has Amir chase Tracy (who falls from a cliff) and subdue Bob, who is taken back to the lab.

Trenton's pawn, Amir, returns home, wearing his own face on Bob's head. On Kalid TV, he appoints Trenton chief of medicine. Trenton listens contentedly, holding the mini-laser in his lap. As Amir continues his pious pledge of betterment for Kalid, counterpoint flash cuts review the sorry circumstances of his comeback.

A hybrid of Hemisphere and I.I. styles, though released by the latter, BRAIN OF BLOOD was a moral depiction of compromised altruism, ending with a cynical conclusion where a mad medic who thinks big succeeds in taking over a small part of the world through a leader brought down by illness and the dehumanization of his cure. In his last film, Grant Williams was able to revive some of his Universal/Warner Bros. integrity, and Kent Taylor was convincingly imperious as Trenton, a perfectly realized outlaw scientist for the seventies save for a basement and two underlings from test-tube terror past. Artist Gray Morrow created a gem of a schlock poster showing the Amir Gor throttling Tracy while surgically-garbed Trenton shot jagged finger-like arcs of energy into Amir's partially exposed brain. The TV card for BRAIN OF BLOOD describes it as THE CREATURE'S REVENGE.

Adamson and Sherman had done something for Hemisphere, which gave back to them FIEND WITH THE ELECTRONIC BRAIN in 1972. For its BLOOD OF CHASTLY HORROR incarnation, a new plot wrinkle added a zombie. It begins chaotically when the zombie, Acro (Richard Smedley), rapidly snuffs several people on a dark street, including a cop. Lt. Cross (Tommy Kirk) of the police receives a mailed



human head, remembering the Corey case at great length. Its time period is evident by Vicki Volante in a bit role as a driver for the jewel ring and lousy, tone-deaf, fifties-sounding jazz. In weaker form, Kent Taylor is Joe's father, Dr. Elton Corey, who created Acro to destroy the killers of his son.

Dr. Venard left a daughter, Susan (Regina Carroll), who had been abroad. Corey lures her to his warehouse lab to give her his zombie drug. The process, he explains, is like a butterfly regressing to the cocoon. Cocooning partway, Susan's skin shrivels and her hair changes from light to dark. Languishing in a cage, Acro is producing anti-bodies that fight his condition. He escapes, kills Corey, and dies. Susan drinks an antidote, becoming a butterfly again, as Lt. Cross enters.

Presented in "Chil-O-Rama," BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR made a half-turn back to its root source when TV named it after Joe's altered psychosis, calling him THE MAN WITH THE SYNTHETIC BRAIN.

The Adamson who actually liked to direct went on a roll in sexploitation and comedy with THE NAUGHTY STEWARDESSES, GIRLS FOR RENT, and BLAZING STEWARDESSES, adding to the flourish of fairy tale "t and a" with the sf-tinged CINDERELLA 2000. His only R-rated horror film was the 1978 CARRIE rip-off, NURSE SHERRI. The second half of the title rhymed with that of its namesake while the first was an invite for porno fans. Sam Sherman had little or no direct role in SHERRI, produced by Mark Sherwood and scripted by its editors, Greg Tittinger and Michael Bockman. BEYOND THE LIVING was the requisite TV title.

Ushered in by the One Step Beyond theme, NURSE SHERRI was a sister to CARRIE only in the sex of its heroine and a few of her powers. Her every action was the work of a dominant male spirit. The lord of a desert religious sect, Thomas Reinauer (Bill Roy) combines astrology with Christian Science. A con man who sees himself as a true messiah, he is an inverted Jim Jones who performs resurrections instead of leading mass suicides. Reinauer and his cohort Stevens (J.C. Welles) bicker over how far their scam can go. On Reinauer's urging, diabetic Brother Mima swore off insulin and is dead. Heading a literal "revival," Reinauer returns life to his decaying shell for a moment, then suffers a heart attack.

Hospitalized involuntarily, Reinauer dies under the knife. Taken by Sherri (Jill Jacobson), he tried to pass his beliefs on to her. In love with Dr. Peter Desmond (Geoffrey Land), her friends are cheery black nurse Tarsa Williams (Marilyn Joi) and another white nurse, Beth (Mary Kay Pass). While asleep, Sherri is visited by Reinauer's essence—a sparkly flow of slithering

green matter that becomes a pulsating cloud full of marking pen scribble screws. Vaginally, he "moves in," taking over Sherri. Tarsa is elated to meet Marcus Washington (Prentiss Moulton), a recently blinded football jack. He wears a voodoo bracelet given to him by his late grandmother. An evil spirit sensor, it wards off demons. It even gained him points on the gridiron.

Stevens was responsible in Reinauer's death only for getting him to the hospital. Emitting a sick, reverberant laugh, Reinauer plays some rickety telekinetic pranks where the wires do not have to be seen to be perceived. When possessed Sherri kills his surgeons, Adamson resorts to cursory carnage like the pitchfork perforation of the first. She appears in the nurses' shower room with a bloody mouth, inadvertently scaring Tarsa.

To kill a spirit, it is sometimes necessary to burn the body. Out of this weary gambit, Adamson firms up the suspense. To learn where Reinauer is buried, inebriated Stevens badgers Peter. Attempting to overtake his car, he faces the astral Reinauer. The angle is off since Stevens fires a gun at windshield glass below the face. After a roadwork barrier fashionably shears off the roof, the car fireballs down a hill. Stevens is thrown clear. Marcus senses Sherri's possession, giving Tarsa the bracelet for luck. Sherri kills another doctor. Hearing the voice of his grandmother, Marcus is attacked by her. Peter has a psychiatric nurse stay with Sherri in her apartment.

Reinauer bluffs Stevens into exhuming the wrong body. He takes it to a foundry, where Adamson stages his most powerfully effectual death scene. Like a surface annex of hell, it is Stevens' way station to eternal damnation. Pelted by the cackling of his sender, he is willing to jump into a vat of molten steel. If he ever comes back, his new birthplace will be General Motors. To free Sherri, Tarsa and Beth pick up Stevens' ball. Tarsa takes the bold initiative while chicken Beth trods grave soil hoping the worst ghost they will meet is Casper. Sherri has killed the companion nurse. Spattered with her splatter, she attacks Peter with meat cleavers. When Tarsa and Beth cremate Reinauer, she collapses.

Her incubus gone to Hades, amnesic Sherri is hereby safe from all present and future demons. The hand of Reinauer has been severed, but the law exerts a technical choke-hold. To avoid jail, she must do penance in a looney bin.

NURSE SHERRI was an Adamson film that copied scenes still fairly new at the time, so it was the most up to date. In a laidback hospital locale, Adamson promoted a great deal of empathy for the agreeable characters of his all-unknown cast. Only Geoffrey Land was a full Adamson regular. In a rather shapeless role, Jill Jacobson let sane Sherri take a back seat to funny Mary Kay Pass as the flip, square-peg Beth and the delectable Marilyn Joi as Tarsa. Marilyn embodied a girlish goodness she seemed incapable of as Velvet, one of the black enforcers of Ilse in HAREN KEEPER OF THE OIL SHIEKS (Tanya Boyd, her uncanny twin Satin, had appeared in Adamson's BLACK HEAT or THE MURDER GANG). Bill Roy—wherever he is—vanished into the abyss that swallows so many obscure actors of compelling interest who almost disappear on purpose to preserve the crispness of their first (sometimes only) impression.

Al Adamson left Independent-International to pursue real estate. He now directs only when the feeling moves him. His last credit, CARNIVAL MAGIC, was a family film without a single satanic sadist, naughty stewardess, bloody brain, or possessed nurse in sight. If only because of certain constants and his whirlwind productivity, Adamson's films made him one of the last exploitation artists who could be counted on season after season to deliver. The progeny of a western equivalent of himself, he not only discovered two other sleaze filmmakers, he also married an actress elevated to schlock stardom by his career. Where would an Al Adamson Jr. go from there?

ADVERTISERS, LOOK AT US! Each new issue of MidMar attracts more and more readers. Simply stated, MidMar reaches the hard-core horror/science fiction/fantasy film audience, and they are most interested in products relating to the hobby. Ad rates can be found on the Contents page. Discover what advertisers in this issue are finding out: an ad in MidMar brings results! Write us for more details!

PHOTO COPY SERVICE: Write to us for our Table of Contents lists. We will make photo-copies of any article for 40¢ per page!



by Gary J. Svehla

\*\*\*\*\* EXCELLENT  
 \*\*\*\* VERY GOOD  
 \*\*\* GOOD  
 \*\* MEDIOCRE  
 \* WORTHLESS

THE FLY: \*\*\*\*\*

When last we encountered director David Cronenberg, he had backed away from his idiosyncratic visions by producing the mainstream thriller, *THE DEAD ZONE*, based upon S. King's novel. The result was something both wonderful and disturbing. On the wonderful side, Cronenberg proved he could direct a superiorly crafted horror film, that he could inspire a bevy of wonderful performers and mold outstanding performances from all of them (especially Christopher Walken whose performance was perhaps the finest of his career). Cronenberg proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that he was a gifted, imaginative filmmaker with far-reaching potential that extended beyond gore, the "new flesh," and phallic monsters. On the disturbing side, Cronenberg appeared to have abandoned his personalized visions for the security and play-it-safe attitude that leads to commercial success.

Just as the premise of Cronenberg's *THE FLY* splices the genes of human and fly to create a new type of organism, Cronenberg the filmmaker has spliced together all the elements from his diverse filmmaking career to produce the ultimate Cronenberg movie. For instance, via Geena Davis and Jeff Goldblum, Cronenberg has once again inspired his actors to create emotional and insightful performances (in Goldblum's case, his best performance since *THE BIG CHILL*). In other words, the superior techniques he executed so well in *THE DEAD ZONE* are incorporated here.

On the other hand, the gore and goo he used so imaginatively in his earlier works such as *THE BROOD* and *VIDEODROME* return to their unfettered state here in *THE FLY*. As Goldblum's humanity slowly disintegrates as the insect politics of the emerging "new flesh" materializes, as Goldblum's ears fall off, as he begins to vomit forth acids and slime, as his chin and mouth recede and crumble away, we have the merging of all of the best elements of Cronenberg's idiosyncratic technique: aberrant philosophy, the transformation of human flesh to a new level, gore and goo, and involving characterizations. Cronenberg's *THE FLY* is not only an absolute improvement over the 1958 original, this movie may very well be Cronenberg's crowning cinematic experience thus far. It is a work of vision and power, unrelenting in its gradually snow-balling momentum.

PSYCHO III: \*\*\*\*

Anthony Perkins' portrayal of Norman Bates and his debuting role of director catapults *PSYCHO III* miles beyond the wasted potential of the second sequel. While Perkins makes no attempt to rival the original Hitchcock-directed *PSYCHO*, he does imaginatively attempt to pay homage to Hitch's original vision, and the attempt is largely successful.

The film's individually superior sequences are more satisfying than the movie as a whole, but several of these individual moments reflect Perkins' inspired visual eye and sense of demented humor. *PSYCHO III*'s best sequence shows the attempted suicide of former nun, Diane Scarwid, whose slit wrists turn her bath water crimson. Norman Bates, wearing mother's wig, armed with his large knife, slowly advances upon the unsuspecting Scarwid. As he is ready to plunge the knife downward into innocent flesh, the groggy, hallucinating Scarwid, her feeble arms outstretched, looks up at the female-garbed Norman Bates, and in her mind, she sees a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The dagger becomes a brightly reflective crucifix. She has found salvation (and maybe love?) in Norman.

Later, the murder of a young tart in a telephone booth reflects the staccato editing and odd angle photography suggesting the shower-murder sequence of Janet Leigh from the original.

Another sequence whereby a corpse is hidden in an outside ice-chest, the sheriff sucking on bloody ice cubes, gore melting on his lips as the concerned Norman looks on, reminds the viewer of a similar sequence from *FRENZY* whereby the audience notices clues that characters on screen should also notice but never do.

Even if Anthony Perkins' direction is sometimes overly arty and obvious, it is inspired and enthusiastic. His performance as Norman Bates, as usual, is exceptional. Never succumbing to the obvious temptation to lampoon the nervous pervers, Perkins always brings a touch of nobility, charm, cleverness, and even love to this hapless victim. The audience cares about the pathetic Norman, and Perkins never once lets his audience down.

RE-ANIMATOR: \*\*\*\*\*

Director Stuart Gordon's *RE-ANIMATOR* may be poor H.P. Lovecraft, but it is superior ultra-gore cinema. Working within a fairly low budget, director Gordon inhabits his production with enough image laden special makeup effects to satisfy the most demanding gore-lover: decapitation (a headless corpse carries his own human head), exploding intestines, re-animated cats, etc. All of these effects are realistically executed which means they are delightfully stomach-turning.

But what makes *RE-ANIMATOR* special is its sense of s.v., twisted humor and its ready acceptance of bad taste. First of all, Jeffrey Combs, portraying the obsessed Herbert West, creates an intricate portrayal of this generation's version of Peter Cushing's Baron Frankenstein, a man who dares to poke his scientific finger into God's pie. The acting, across the board, is above average for exploitation cinema with the screenwriter creating believable human characters. The complex plot, taking twists, turns, and featuring numerous surprises along the way, never succumbs to predictability.

Its kinky sexuality forced *RE-ANIMATOR* to be released to video in two versions: its theatrical "NR" and a new "R" rated version (which includes out-takes from the original, many of which explain plot holes). In the "NR" version, a decapitated head "explores" the naked body of lovely Barbara Crampton who is tied down to



an operating table. No subtlety here- nothing is left to the imagination! But the manner in which this graphic, cinematic erotica is portrayed more often induces nervous smiles and laughter than utter disgust. Stuart Gordon, being quite aware of the distaste he brings to specific avenues of the production (the ultra-gore, the perverted sexuality, becomes the naughtily little boy who flexes his creative muscles as to be noticed. RE-ANIMATOR succeeds only too well for Stuart Gordon is rapidly becoming a recognized genre name. RE-ANIMATOR is a true guilty pleasure, a film that manages to entertain while it grosses out audiences.

#### NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART II: FREDDY'S REVENGE: \* \*

Freddy Krueger might be a star, but he's diddly-squat without his creative father, writer/director Wes Craven (mercilessly absent from this quick-buck sequel). Craven's original film created surreal/psychological horror constructed upon the premise that the heroine, personable Heather Lengenkamp, never knew if she were asleep or awake. Until the cluttered ending, Krueger could only enter the psyches of his intended victims while they slept.

In FREDDY'S REVENGE, the premise changes to a more predictable AMITYVILLE HORROR demon possession scenario. The differentiation between the state of dreaming and being awake is totally lost, and Craven's eerie visual nightmares- primal in their stark simplicity -are nowhere to be found. Any one of Craven's hallucinatory images (the black lagoon under Lengenkamp's bath water, the house stairs that turn to marshmallow, the family phone that sprouts a drooling tongue) cuts this film to ribbons.

#### HIGHLANDER: \* \* \* \*

An attempt to blend classic medieval fantasy-adventure (a la LADYHAWKE)- commercial suicide today -with the high-tech sheen of MTV music videos (thus the involvement of famed music video wizard Russell Mulcahy here as director). If the movie-makers are wearing their wallets on their sleeves a little too blatantly, the resulting film- HIGHLANDER -is a visual delight. The action, pacing, and visual appearance of the film are marvelous. Self-conscious "arty" editing blending the sequences in the medieval world with those in the present high-tech culture does call attention to itself. The film exists in an emotional vacuum. But the set design, costumes, and the art direction are totally believable and satisfying. The first climatic sword fight between Clancy Brown (so wonderful as the "monster" in THE BRIDE) and Sean Connery contains set design straight from a Frank Frazetta painting. The superficiality of the visuals and action carry the film. While it might be easy to criticize HIGHLANDER for its commercial compromise of creativity and its lack of emotional depth, it very well succeeds nicely on what it does well- entertain!

#### INVADERS FROM MARS: \* \* \*

Many people misunderstand Tobe Hooper's intriguing remake of William Cameron Menzies' INVADERS FROM MARS. The original, not a flawless classic in any sense of the word (the 78-minute film is constantly being padded with military hardware,, is here reinterpreted by the visual eye of Hooper. Basically, INVADERS FROM MARS seems more a labor of love than a commercially minded project something that could only hinder Hooper's career after the boxoffice bottomed out on LIFEFORCE), a film produced not only as homage to Menzies, but as a tribute to the original by a fan. The remake is too silly and child like to appeal to young teen audiences, and perhaps is too techno-flashy for lovers of the original. Who then is this film marketed for? Hooper's labor of love was dismissed without forethought by almost everyone. It's their loss.

In texture and tone, INVADERS FROM MARS mostly reminds the viewer of Disney's imaginative fantasy, RETURN TO OZ. Both films feature monsters and threatening characterizations created from the psychological viewpoint of young children. For instance, the phallic, snake like supreme Martian intelligence is referred to as "dick-head" by child actor Hunter Carson. The Martian drones are cast in the perverted likeness of Mr. Potato Head, everyone's childhood toy. Louise Fletcher, portraying the caricatured nasty teacher/villain, imbues her performance with all the venom which

every child projects into his/her least favorite teacher. Hooper's INVADERS FROM MARS is imaginative fantasy in the most psychological sense. Nothing here is realistic- human beings, monsters, or the military (in every little boy's mind there exists the conviction that all generals are ready to throw security aside and admit any child into their private quarters to discuss threats to national security; and though very silly, such a sequence does occur here). Acting is stilted and one-dimensional, but isn't this how little boys envision their parents, teachers, generals, etc.? When accepted simply for what it is, INVADERS FROM MARS uses its techno-vaneer of rock video lighting, color, and effects to mirror the psyche of every little boy living in today's world.

Even the entrance to the Martian spaceship is located by young Hunter Carson who travels downward through a maze of almost organic underground tunnels, a symbolic descent from the world of reality into the hellish world of a terrified young boy's psyche. Once below the surface, the emerging, subjective child's vision takes over. And what a marvelous trip it is!

#### THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE PART 2: \* \* \* \* \*

Respected screenwriter L.M. Kit Carson [PARIS, TEXAS] and now mainstream horror director Tobe Hooper joined creative forces to make the sequel to perhaps the archetypal modern horror film, TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE ( a non-splatter film credited as being one of the first films to herald the ultra-gore genre).

Even though CHAINSAW 2 relies a little too heavily on repeating the best sequences from the original (the ritualistic chain saw dance at the finale of both films; the ritualistic head-bashing-in-the-basin carried out by Grandpa), the sequel, with makeup effects artist Tom Savini's participation, becomes the gorefest the original was unfairly branded. CHAINSAW 2 is perverted, twisted, overly violent, and kinky. I almost feel ashamed to admit it, but I found the movie to have moments of absolute brilliance. The film is calculated to operate on so many levels: it attempts to both humanize and satirize the fractured nuclear family that lives and dies by the saw. Leatherface, thrusting his non-operational chain saw along the trembling thighs of horrified radio D.J. Stretch as he sputters in orgasmic delight (she being effectively

Freddy Krueger from NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART II: FREDDY'S REVENGE. This sequel pales when compared to the original thriller!



played by Caroline Williams), has something on his mind besides slice-and-dice. Quickly falling in "love" with Stretch, Leatherface slices off the face of her never-quite-dead radio station assistant (who, after being partially skinned alive, suddenly gets up, frees the bound hands of Stretch, spits, apologizes for literally "falling apart," and then dies again) and all so lovingly lays the raw, bloody flesh over the terrified face of Stretch. The couple, upon Leatherface's insistence, then dance (Stretch being too frightened to resist, afraid she will call attention to herself from other family members nearby who do not realize the "toy" Leatherface has found in his lair). Somehow this unsettling sequence is raw-nerved yet strangely affecting.

The chainsaw family- Chop Top (Bill Moseley), Leatherface (Bill Johnson), and The Cook (Jim Siedow, the only original cast member to return) -turn in energetic performances, brilliantly enacted as far as making the audience believe that these are living, breathing maniacs that have unique personalities. Chop Top, who carries his dead brother, the Hitchhiker, around like a puppet, heats a wire hanger with his lighter to hear it sizzle when he touches it to the metal plate in his skull (discreetly hidden by a so-called "Sonny Bono wig"). Jim Siedow's performance as The Cook, the annual winner of the state's "best Chili" contest ("It's all in the meat"), is always quirky (his smile instantly reflects his demented personality), constantly yelling orders, kicking Leatherface in the butt, and doing whatever it takes to keep the family together (chastising Leatherface for physically being attracted to Stretch, The Cook rants: "You pick her over the family...the saw!!")

The real star of the production is the massive subterranean sets, joined by swirling, twisted tunnels built underground a deserted Texas amusement park. There, long passageways immense in scope are "decorated" with corpses (one even sits Slim Pickens Sigourney Weaver menaced by one of the alien drones from this year's "Mid-Marvelous" genre film of the year, the superb ALIENS.

style atop a bomb!), dust, and antique furniture. Hundreds of bare light bulbs provide the garish illumination. Just as Hooper's tunnel led down to the psychological world of terror inherent in childhood fantasy in his INVADERS FROM MARS, here a similar network of tunnels leads downward to adult hell. Art direction here creates an unsettling, twisted world of the underground that lingers long after the final credits have faded. The entire second half of the movie occurs underground where Texas Ranger "Lefty" (Dennis Hooper), chain saw in arm, prepares to meet and defeat Leatherface on his home turf. Reminding viewers of a twisted spoof on the STAR WARS light-saber duels, sparks do fly as this battle of the chain saws leads out of the tunnels up to the lair of decomposing matriarch Grandma, a chain saw sitting on her long-decaying lap. Filled with incredibly disquieting horror, stark visual imagery, and insane yet effective characterizations, THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE PART 2's superiority to most other horror films is quickly witnessed by the viewer's inability to easily laugh this barrage to the senses away. Weeks after watching the movie, the imagery of horror continues to burn brightly in one's head. Few horror films are this disturbing. Few horror films reach inside your psyche and tie your nerves in a knot. CHAINSAW 2, for better or worse, manages to effect the viewer as few other horror films have ever done.

ALIENS: \* \* \* \* \*

Being one of those rare people who simply enjoyed James Cameron's THE TERMINATOR without raving out of control, I was not entirely happy to see the schlock "B" movie-maker Cameron replace the artistic Ridley Scott as director/writer of ALIEN's sequel.

But I'll be first to admit that the relative novice filmmaker Cameron rises to the occasion with this visually inspiring, action-packed thriller which wisely avoids attempting to upstage the major artistic accomplishments of the original. Therefore, ALIENS does not continue the blatant sexual imagery initiated in ALIEN nor does it dazzle the eyes with psychologically rendered planet-scapes and alien architecture. ALIENS does not try to duplicate the subtly revealed imagery of an original all-so-alien monster that appears to be indestructible.

Instead Cameron transforms Scott's funhouse in outer space into a Howard Hawks' derived war movie/western (stressing male and female camaraderie). While the claustrophobic horror of the original film is maintained, the barrage of a dozen alien drones upon unsuspecting humans fosters a different variety of fear and horror.

The new ground that Cameron cuts in ALIENS makes the movie no longer a derivative sequel but a movie worthy to be judged as an outstanding extension of the original. First and foremost, it is amazing to consider the fact that such an energy-charged action-thriller develops characterization to the degree it does. The emotionally involving sequences between Sigourney Weaver and Carrie Henn elevate the Weaver character to new levels of sophistication and sympathy. Here she becomes a multi-dimensional human being, and her performance shows growth and maturity over her original performance. Also, the ensemble acting of the military unit, quickly established amid the heat of battle and tense discovery, allows the viewer to identify and care about these characters to a much greater degree than the viewer identified with the cast of characters in ALIEN. The pacing of ALIEN was often purposely sluggish and sonambulant; ALIENS' pacing is hyper-charged.

Even if the alien drones are destructible, the surprise of the movie is "mother," the egg-laying maternal alien leader. Weaver, the symbolic Earth-mother, battles the monster-mother to free the universe from this scourge of terror.

While Cameron's movie is superficial lacking the artistic vision of the original, ALIENS, in its own right, is just as marvelous a movie. Containing excellent performances, featuring superior action, tension, and special effects, ALIENS is perhaps the best pulp science fiction adventure to hit the theaters in a long, long time.

Therefore, ALIENS is my personal choice for "Mid-Marvelous" genre film of the year. Simply put, ALIENS' intergalactic wallop strikes true to the heart of both adventure and fear.

[Continued on page 35]





# BOOK REVIEWS

by Gary J. Svehla

The following books are available from FantaCo Enterprises, Inc., 21 Central Avenue, Dept. 35MM, Albany, New York 12210 (phone: 518-463-3667). Please include \$3.00 postage and handling per order. Write FantaCo for lists of new genre books available.

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF HORROR MOVIES by Denis Gifford, over-sized, hardback, 232 pages, \$12.00.

The first of our two over-sized horror movie coffee-table volumes, impressively published on glossy paper, profusely illustrated with more than 400 stills and posters, 16 of them in color.

The text by renowned genre writer Denis Gifford covers all the bases from the silent GÖLEM through Lon Chaney cinema, from KING KONG through the "golden age" Karloff-Lugosi Universal chillers, and from the curse of the 1940's "B" people through British horror right up until today's slasher films. While the interesting text rarely tells us anything new, it is Gifford's selection of stills and poster art that really puts this volume across.

HORRORS: A HISTORY OF HORROR MOVIES by Tom Hutchinson and Roy Pickard, over-sized, hardback, 192 pages, \$19.95.

Another pretty-to-look-at coffee-table history of the horror film covering the gamut from Dracula, Mad Doctors, the Undead, all varieties of movie Monsters, S.F. threats, and Future Shock, among others. The text is even more run-of-the-mill and simplistic than Gifford's was; however, the illustrations displaying color photos and color poster reproduction (lobbies from the 1931 FRANKENSTEIN, the Chaney Jr. MUMMY films, etc.) alone are (almost) worth the price of the book. Here's a volume much better to look at than to read!

STAY OUT OF THE SHOWER by William Schoell, digest-size, paper, 184 pages, \$14.95.

A rather interesting volume to read that analyzes 25 years of "shocker" films beginning with PSYCHO. The scattered graphics, all reproduced in black-and-white, are secondary to involving interpretations of the birth of the modern slasher genre (here renamed "shocker" films). Some of the more interesting chapters attempt to confront "Women as Victims" differentiating between the audience's delight in the "sex-and-violence connection" and misogynous attitudes in general. Schoell, in other chapters, forcefully defends modern horror cinema: "the horror genre will always make room for creative violence...its (figurative) life's blood." He also profiles the best and the worst of the genre with 10 representative films and includes critical probes of the top shocker directors. Always thought-provoking, this is a volume that is essential to every library.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS by John McCarty and Brian Kelleher, digest-size, paper, 338 pages, \$12.95.

Most people were expecting McCarty and Kelleher to give the decade-surviving Hitchcock TV series the same treatment given TWILIGHT ZONE in The Twilight Zone Companion by Zicree. But the simple fact remains that Hitchcock's TV series lasted 10 years, twice as long as TZ, so this Hitchcock volume forgoes critical

commentary instead opting for a basic filmography/credits/synopsis of each episode.

The book's real "meat" occurs within the first 56 pages whereby the complete history of how the series came to be is featured (answering why the then successful Hitchcock even considered coming to TV) containing interviews from various members of the creative Hitchcock team.

THE COMPLETE NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD FILMBOOK by John Russo, 8½ by 11 inches, paper, 120 pages, \$12.95.

Another important volume for the bookshelf. John Russo, co-writer of the original Romero-directed NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, reveals all the gory details how this small creative gang from Pittsburgh managed to create the classic/cult horror film of the last 20 years (from original conception, production, post-production, through distribution).

Written in the same off-the-wall spirit that the finished movie oozed, Russo's text is always crammed with detailed information. The numerous photos (many behind-the-scenes, never before published), ads, and posters (a few reproduced in color) only further drive home the point just how essential this book is. A must for all Romero/Dead fans.

CULT TV by John Javna, 8½ by 11 inches, paper, 256 pages, \$12.95.

Not just another hacked-out book exploiting the nation's obsession with nostalgia. Cult TV is a knock-out (impressively laid-out, concise, factual) and it is apparent that Javna spent a great deal of time researching all the diverse information.

For example, examining the section on TWILIGHT ZONE (the same format is followed throughout the chapter), the reader is given a brief career bio of all the creative talent and some of the stars, a description of the opening of the show, some classic quotes from the best episodes, a run-down with synopsis of the best episodes, the factual origin of the series, and other surprising little-known information.

The book is divided into "Cult Classics," "Lost Cults," "Underground Cults," "Prime Time Cults," "Fan Letters," etc. While fantasy/s.f. plays only a small part in the overall book, Cult TV contains interesting reading from start to finish.

PSYCHOS by John McCarty, 8½ by 11 inches, paper, 212 pages, \$12.95.

Psychos is John McCarty's own analysis of "psychofilms," similar in approach to Schoell's Stay Out of the Shower. However, while Schoell's volume only analyzes the genre after 1959, McCarty's more ambitious book goes back 80 years. Psychos makes interesting reading offering both a thematic (chapters include "Jekyll and Hyde," "Forerunners of Norman Bates," "Female Psychos," "Halloween and the Exploitation Psycho," etc.) approach for historically unraveling the genre. While McCarty includes ample criticism with his lengthy synopses and production details, for the most part he avoids controversy which Schoell delivered to his advantage. Still, Psychos is the most definitive history, and from the standpoint of layout and photo use (including a small color section), this McCarty book is impressive.

[Continued on Page 31]





*midnight marquee*

# GRAVE DIGGINGS

Dear Sir:

In the Fall 1985 issue of *Midnight Marquee*, your review of METROPOLIS states that "Fritz Lang and Moroder must both accept equal credit for this."

What a vile and irresponsible thing to say, as Fritz Lang, dead for nine years, cannot defend himself against such a degrading accusation.

Kevin Engelman  
Cambridge, MA

[Mr. Engelman, I stand by what I said last issue. I give Lang the most credit for creating a film classic. But I extend a great deal of credit to Mr. Moroder for opening the film to a new generation of movie viewers who might not have ever seen the film had it not been for Moroder. Moroder's heart was in the right place.-GS]

Dear Gary Svehle:

Michael Brunas' well-researched article on THE INVISIBLE RAY was good, though I wouldn't have called it an "analysis," as that implies an examination of value systems, themes and meaning; Brunas didn't do that. Incidentally, he's mistaken when he said "The Hangover Murders" was not filmed; it was not only filmed, but was directed by none other than James Whale (and was, in fact, his favorite movie). Neither Frances Drake nor Frank Lawton were in it, however; the stars were Edward Arnold, Constance Cummings, and Robert Young. Robert Armstrong also appeared, and the release title was REMEMBER LAST NIGHT? (1935).

Also in his article, Brunas makes another error, one I wish was fact rather than legend. Alas, but BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN was not a financial success; as he noted, it marked the end of the horror period, and that's because the bottom had dropped out of the horror market. BRIDE was a hit in release several years later- 1938, I believe -but on first release, faded from view all too quickly.

Someday I am going to do an article for a general film magazine on all these Hollywood myths: "facts" that are actually fiction. You hear people say as if they were true things like Fatty Arbuckle was guilty; his bad speaking voice doomed John Gilbert's career; CITIZEN KANE was a boxoffice flop; THE WIZARD OF OZ was a hit; 3-D movies of the '50s used red & green glasses; Ray Bradbury did not write IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE; heavy publicity made STAR WARS a hit. All of these are flatly not true. And now maybe we'll have to add: BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN was a hit in its first release.

It takes all kinds, I suppose, but I thought Romero's DAY OF THE DEAD was pretty nearly a total disaster; it was shrill, loud, and unpleasant; the characters were either thinly drawn or cliches; most of the acting was badly overdone; the music was blatant and insistent; even the gore effects- most of which were dramatically unnecessary -were not especially well done. It's too bad there's no one for George Romero to listen to, a voice that could convince him the script needed a heavy rewrite...

Bill Warren  
Los Angeles, CA

[A review of Bill Warren's latest book, *Keep Watching the Skies Volume II*, appears in our book review column this issue! -GS]

Dear Gary:

I've just read your latest edition of MidMar and must say it is (in my opinion) one of your best issues ever! While I do not particularly enjoy reading about the old horror pictures anymore, I was completely engrossed by the coverage of THE INVISIBLE RAY and GHOST BREAKERS. These pieces certainly brought new life to the old chestnuts for me.

Your Larry Cohen article/interview was insightful and full of fresh ideas. I had lunch with him during the AFM (American Film Market) last March and found him to be a regular guy, as compared to most film types. His film BONE is distributed by my partner, Jack H. Harris, and has recently been sold to New World Video as HOUSEWIFE.

The reviews are by far too full of praise to be taken seriously. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if some of the distributors connected with these films started using your comments in their ad copy! I won't go into detail, but I think the pressures of modern movie going have started to have a deteriorating effect on you, Gary. It must be like that euphoric high one gets when the oxygen becomes too thin. Whether I agree with you or not, I did enjoy your writing and I'm glad you feel that things are on the upswing.

Fred Olen Ray  
Van Nuys, CA

[Former fan and current genre director, Fred Olen Ray is about to hit the "big time!" After having completed BIOHAZARD (with Aldo Ray and Angelique Pettyjohn), THE TOMB (with John Carradine and Sybil Danning), Ray's biggest-budgeted production to date, JADE JUNGLE, awaits momentary release. We wish him well.-GS]

Dear Gary:

Responding to MidMar #34, I want to thank you for this wonderful issue and your return to the "more art" format. This is lacking so much in the pro-zines; I'm afraid our imaginations may be nullified with all the slick vivid color photo mega. But ink is oil is power, and we like to show it off. Returning to this format rekindled memories of *Gore Creatures*!

I prefer the cover this time over the Jackson & E.T. ones (strictly personal). I am blown away by Nelson's duo-tones and the graphic intensity of the logo. *Zoom* and *Interview*, take note...the magazine of the eighties! Nelson's LIFE FORCE...utterly electrifying!! Mark Robinson's Karloff brought back memories of Dave Ludwig from issues of old. Koszowski's THING: I love Koszowski and he keeps getting better! I can't praise the artists and art direction on this issue enough!

As for memorable films of the past year, I was struck by METROPOLIS having missed every opportunity to see the original. I'm especially happy that I agree with you this time for best film choice (re: MidMar #29, page 46). Buried under the summer releases and other zombie fever, DAY OF THE DEAD had its day and to my surprise a possible sequel. I was actually afraid that you might not like it, especially after bad reviews (from Siskel and Ebert) and poor (er) box office draws. Was not overly impressed with ELM STREET but feel this was due to interruptions during the viewing, so I will have to rent it again.

James Diederichsen (ex-editor of *Teratoid/Ster Song*)  
Reno, Nevada

